

**Series: THE SECOND MILE**

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 10, 2019  
**YOUR GREATEST GIFT TO THE WORLD**  
**Matthew 5:13-16**  
SPEAKER: KEN DAVIS

1. How many of you have ever been rejected? How did it feel? How many of you **went back for more?** I recently heard a talk from a guy named Jia Jiang—a guy who has written a book called, **Rejection Proof**—about something called **rejection therapy**. His story parallels some of ours—coming to North America with a dream for our future. His dream was to become the next Bill Gates. Well, that didn't happen. At the age of 30, he had a 6 figure income, a beautiful home, a beautiful wife and a baby on the way—he was miserable; he felt stuck in a job he hated—even though it more than paid the bills.

-His wife said, "Why don't you quit your job and spend the next 6 months pursuing your dream?" So he did--until the investors he was counting on rejected his idea. He was devastated. He decided that he needed **rejection therapy**. He needed to **rejection-proof** his life. The plan he developed was called, **100 Days of Rejection**. It involved asking strangers for ridiculous things that were **sure** to be rejected.

For example:

**\*To ask a stranger for \$100**

**\*To ask a stranger if he could play soccer in their back yard**

**\*To pull over a police officer and ask to drive the car**

**\*To ask a Krispy Kreme employee named Jackie to make him a donut in the shape of the Olympic symbol.**

-He video-taped the whole thing—and the video footage on **YouTube** went viral—check it out sometime!

- a. Jia came to comes conclusions about rejection that you might find helpful:

\*First, rejection is **not** failure; it's a numbers game. For example, J.K. Rowling took the concept of Harry Potter to 12 different publishers before she found one that would publish it.

\*Second, rejection is someone's **opinion**—and opinion is cheap.

\*Third, rejection forces you to **check your values**—and why you're doing what you're doing. It can help you **grow** as a person.

- b. Now, why am I talking about that? It's because Jesus calls **us—His followers** to a **powerful** mission—a **mission with the best news ever**—a **mission that HAS changed history—and will change eternity**—but it's a mission that will likely cause us, at times, to encounter something we both hate and fear—**rejection**.

- c. Jesus the Christ came to make **all things right** in this world—and He changed the world more—**way** more—than any other person has. He loved, healed, forgave—and showed everyone Who God really was. But He **also** told the truth. And for that, He was hated, rejected and executed.

-And He called us—His Followers—to live **His** kind of life—and have the **same** kind of effect He had. He called it being the **salt of the earth** and the **light of the world**. Here's the question you and I need to ask ourselves; will our fear of rejection keep us from our true calling. And that's a question only **you** can answer!

2. After talking about **what God blesses**—the path that **leads** to happiness, Jesus then switches things up with this challenge:

**You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.**  
(Matthew 5:13-16 NLT)

-Let's talk about the word **blessed**. I'll tell you where it comes from: When God calls Abraham to be the founder of whole nation that will serve Him, He says:

**I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.** (Genesis 12:2-3 NLT)

-When Jesus used the word **blessed** eight times at the front end of his message, **this** is what people would've thought about. God blesses us—and then the **plan** is: **All the families on earth will be blessed through you. We are not storage containers; We are teapots.** What is poured **out** to us and **into** us isn't intended to **stay** there. Later on, God says to the Israelite community that this **blessed to be a blessing** thing is not a nice idea; it's a **covenant. A sacred, enduring promise.** Listen to the imagery God uses:

**It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the Lord for both you and your offspring.**  
(Numbers 18:19 NIV)

- a. Why **salt**? In our culture, salt is cheap—and has a bad rap; salt is something that raises our blood pressure and rusts our cars. We are urged to adopt **low salt diets**. The **truth** is that we need salt to survive! Did you **know** that?

-In 30 A.D., with no refrigeration, decay was the enemy of **all** food. So, imagine Jesus' disciples bringing in a load of fish to sell. It's 40 c.—and the fish is sitting there on shore. How many of you would eat fish that has been sitting in the sun all day? Salt was the only thing that preserved food—particularly meat. Salt is a **powerful** image.

-You've heard the saying that someone is **worth their salt**, right? The Romans sometimes paid their soldiers with salt—which is why we call what we're paid a **sal-ary**. Even the term **sal-ad** comes from the Roman practice of salting leafy vegetables. Salt was **extremely** valuable. Entire wars were fought over it—because without salt, people died.

-Don't miss Jesus point here; that as **His Followers** with **His Spirit** in us, we have huge value in a world system where there is a **lot** of rot and decay. He didn't say, "You **could** be the salt of their earth!" He says, "You **are** the salt of the earth! You are God's means of helping a saltless, decaying world **survive!**"

- b. The other image used by God in referring to this covenant of blessing was **light**.

**I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles. (Isaiah 42:6 NIV)**

-In many of the prophecies describing Jesus' coming, it's described as light **dawning on the Gentiles**. In case you don't realize this—if this hadn't happened, none of us would be here. I'm a Gentile—and so are most of you! This is the plan:

**I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. (Isaiah 49:6 NIV)**

-How many of you think that most sophisticated countries—like the US and Canada, have great clarity in terms of what they need to do—and **not** do—**who** they are—and how to solve the problems they face? I'd say that, for the most part, we're just stumbling around in the darkness, saying, "**Let's try this!**" And the **internet**—this firehose of information that comes through our smart phones **isn't** giving us more light—just creating more confusion and anxiety. Now—am I **crazy**—or would you agree?

- c. So Rome was the main Gentile presence in Jesus' day. Their plan was to **bless themselves** by squashing Israel and extricating everything they could to prop up their Empire. So, what was the response of this people to God's call to **bless** them?

\*The **Zealots** wanted to kill the Romans for their greed and love of power.

\*The **Sadducees** wanted to cooperate so **they** could get more money and not be killed.

\*The **Pharisees** wanted to become so holy that God would preserve them and kill everyone else.

\*The **Essenes** just wanted to escape—so they went and lived in communes in the desert.

- d. Now, does anyone see what's missing from all these groups? It's **being the blessing that they were called to be—being SALT and LIGHT**. And that is precisely where Jesus steps in; after warning them about the cost, He says to them, "You **are** the salt of the earth; you **are** the light of the world!" **THAT'S WHAT JESUS CAME TO DO!**

3. Let me just bring this down to where the rubber meets the road for us. It's our influence. Sin spoil is the invisible contamination that **kills** what it touches. Several weeks ago we had turkey on Thanksgiving. So, afterwards I boiled the bones to make soup—and put it in the garage thinking it would be cool enough.

-Several days later, I pulled it out to make the soup. As I cooked it, it smelled a little funky, so I tasted it. **YUCK!** Sure enough, it had gone bad. Some **invisible force** had wreck it—cause it wasn't salted or refrigerated. **That's what sin does; it spoils EVERYTHING.**

-Sin deteriorates and spoils everything. Jesus says to us, "**You're the salt of the earth! You are my plan to bring flavor, to disinfect wounds, to stop the process of decay! Will you just be SALT?**" The **plan** is that Jesus shows **us** how to be happy and filled with joy—and gives us power to stop doing self-destructive things.

- a. And then He uses us to quietly and silently flavor and preserve the world. I'll tell you what it is; It's **Jesus'** influence lived out in the places and among the people where we find ourselves. The salt wasn't the buck-a-box stuff we think of. It was expensive and critical to the preservation of life!
- b. Remember, Jesus said, "You **are** the salt of the earth!" It wasn't like, "You **could** be—if you're really, really holy and know your Bibles." You **are...!** And they knew **exactly** what Jesus meant; that without them, things would rot, die, get infected. **They** were the ones that brought life and flavor.

4. The second image Jesus uses in this passage is **light**. This is a phenomenal illustration. Jesus called himself the Light of the World—coming as a **light to the Gentiles**. Jesus was do what the nation of Israel was **called** to do—but never did. Jesus' realm of authority is called the Kingdom of Light—as compared to Satan's kingdom—the kingdom of darkness.

-Know how Toronto's downtown **really** starts cookin' after ten—called the **night life?** In Jesus' world, there **was** no such thing. When it got dark, it **was** dark for the next 12 hours—apart from torches and tiny oil lamps like this. Jesus said to this group, "You are **the** light of the world."

- a. I would imagine that people immediately began thinking of what it was like on the **really** dark nights in their culture. Has anyone here ever stubbed their toe—or felt a sense of fear when you're in a dark place? Or pulled an all-nighter—and felt the relief when morning came? Light gives clarity; it shows what's real and what's **not** real. Light helps you find things that are lost!
- b. Without light, there's no perspective or color or texture. You hear a noise in your backyard—and you can't tell if it's a raccoon or a bear. I got up early one morning to head to the office while it was still dark. When I got there, I realized I was wearing one brown shoe and one black shoe! Light helps you see whether your lipstick is on your lips or your nose.

-But light also exposes. I've done drywall work and thought it looked **amazing**—till the light exposed ridges and bumps. And light exposes other stuff—**good** stuff. Can you imagine flying in a plane that couldn't be inspected—cause there was no light?

- c. Jesus said, "If you're my follower—**you're the light of the world!** A single candle can be seen for 20 miles on a dark, clear night! If you've ever flown into Toronto at night—you see **hundreds of thousands of points of light!** **That's what we are!**
- d. **Remember the blackout in August, 2003?**

I remember walking around our neighborhood that evening in the dark and thinking about how strange it was—no music, no light, no buzz of air-conditioners. Nothing. Jesus is saying, “Don’t give up your identity! **You** are the power-grid of the **world!**”

5. So, this is all good news so far, right?

That we are the influences that will **preserve** the world and light the way. Jesus then throws out a **What if?** What if the salt of the earth quits **being salt?** What if the shades get drawn on the **light of the world?** He actually spends more time on **this** possibility.

-See, sometimes in that culture, the salt wasn’t pure; it was mixed with gypsum—and it was **useless**. There was still **some** salt content—and would kill your lawn or garden. The only thing to do with it was throw it on the streets.

-Imagine leaving an oil lamp on 24/7—under a basket or a cardboard box. We leave lights on all the time. But to leave a light on in that culture—open flames in a place where it couldn’t be seen was dangerous, expensive and **dumb!**

a. You get Jesus point, right? “What if my followers—on a critical mission from the Father **the salt** of the earth and **the light of the world**—just chicken out? What if they just out and out **refuse** to be **who** they’re called to be?”

-That’s a pretty powerful question, because both you and I **both** know that happens. Things rot and die and taste awful; there’s no color, no clarity—people stumble around in the **dark**. And why? Why would anyone give up such a critical responsibility?

-Sometimes people **misuse** salt and light. When I was in university, we’d sometimes loosen the lid on the salt-shaker as a prank. The next person to use it would dump the whole load on their roast beef or chicken—mummifying it on the spot. Salt works best when it’s **sprinkled** not **dumped**. Too much salt ruins food, raises blood pressure and rusts cars. The Dead Sea is **full** of salt—and it’s **dead!** The salt comes from the Spirit of Jesus who wasn’t just full of **truth**—He was full of **grace**.

b. Light, like salt, is necessary for life! Light makes life **fun**—not dangerous. But light can be misused too. This spotlight is made from an airplane landing light—and it will knock you flat! Light, like salt, can be misused. To misuse it to make ourselves look superior or win an argument or get our own way—is just, well —**wrong**--and turns people away from the only One who can save them.

c. But the thing Jesus speaks most pointedly to is **disuse**. Let’s just be clear on what this is. This is basically living as if our only responsibility is to use the life God has given to us to make our lives better and get to Heaven—**too bad about everyone else!**

-And Jesus point is **so** clear; the blessing that Jesus pours into us through the Spirit of God—His kingdom of healing and wholeness and hope; the comfort, perspective and clarity **is** for us—but it’s **not all about us!** God doesn’t sponsor self-centeredness or self-interest!

-Look at the language: salt **of the EARTH**, light **of the WORLD**; a city on a hill **cannot be hidden**; ...they put it on a stand, and ...**Then it gives light to EVERYONE.**

**In the same way, let your light shine so OTHERS can see it. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will bring glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:15-16 NIRV)**

- d. Now, here's my question—and think *carefully*: If the purpose of our very *being* as Followers of Jesus is to be salt, shine light, change, preserve, flavor, purify, clear up confusion—***change eternities and change the world--why WOULDN'T we do that?***

I think there are two inner reservations we have. The first is related to Jia Jiang's research: ***"What if I get rejected? What if I'm seen as some weird, conservative intolerant person? What if my kindness and generosity gets misunderstood and I get taken advantage of? FEAR!***

The second inner comment is, ***"I just don't have time for this! I'm so busy! Someday when life settles down I'll engage!*** Does anyone know when life settles down? When you **die!** Man, things settle right down—and your schedule clears up immediately. But, then, your chance to be salt and light is over. Here's my question; ***What DO you have time for?***

-Whatever the specifics, I think it's a ***price tag*** thing. And Jesus was up front about that. He said, "There ***is*** a price tag! They've ***always*** insulted the prophets. Chased them out of town. Slandered them. Made their lives miserable!"

-Here's what I know; if we're truly ***Good News***—if want to thank ***Someone*** for the good we do, for the way we love—***THAT'S when people will take us seriously.*** If we live out the kindness, justice and mercy of Jesus--over time, people will believe the message of Jesus' love. In just over 300 years, the salt and light of Jesus' followers took down Rome!

- e. But it now; not some day when I'm a better Christian—not some day when I've made it and I'm powerful and influential—and not some day when I suddenly have all this time and money free up. Jesus says, ***"Being salt and light is your very reason for being.*** That is how the world will get changed. You ***are*** the salt and light."

-I want you to think about Jesus disciples. ***They were not impressive guys!*** They were kind of slow when it came to picking up on what He was doing. Peter actually told Jesus off. James and John wanted power—and once asked if Jesus wanted them to call down fire and fry a bunch of Samaritans. And ***these*** were the ones to whom Jesus said, "You ***are*** my plan for changing ***everything!***"

-The people of that day said, ***You've got to be kidding!*** And ***then*** they flipped the whole world system on its back. Hear me; ***God is not impressed with your ability, education, resume or bank account.*** He's impressed with our ***availability*** and our ***humility!***

6. There's one thing in common that light and salt have—and are ***totally ineffective*** if they don't have it. Any ***guesses?*** It's ***contact.*** Put salt in a plastic bag with a twist-tie on it, and

it won't rust your car or raise your blood pressure—but it won't melt snow, cure meat or flavor food. It's useless. Same with light. It actually has to get **into the darkness** to work. I think that's precisely why Jesus used that imagery.

-I don't know if you've noticed this, but the main temptation for followers of Jesus is to be **salt blocks!** To withdraw, to build Christian retirement villages, Christian schools—to just **get away** from the world system that Jesus has called us to be *in...*but not *of*. He sure was in it—and got **bitterly criticized** for it. But, then, **He changed the world!**

a. The same is true of **light**. Lori and I used to sing this song with another couple called **The Lighthouse**. Cool image, **great** song—but it's **all wrong!** Jesus never intended for his Church, His people to be isolated. A light on some rocky island, not shining on anything in particular. Jesus has told us to light up **rooms**—you know, where ordinary stuff happens.

b. Here's the deal; the Spirit is the salt and light—all **we** do is cooperate, make contact. He grows the fruit in us that brings beauty. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. **This** is the deal. We cooperate—we make the contact, the Holy Spirit pours on the salt, turns up the light—whatever is needed.

-Know how this happens? Well, this passage tells us. Good deeds. That's how it happens. It's not preaching at people, telling them where they're wrong and you're right. It's just looking for opportunities to love. Love is powerful, irresistible, amazing. **Everyone** wants to be loved. Love shines through your eyes, warms up your hands—and does some of its best work through your wallet.

c. There's one more think you need to know. Being salt and light is **critical** to your happiness. We've been over this, right—that the **happiest** and **healthiest** people in the world are those who **give back**. In fact, I could put it like this; **to focus all of you on YOU is a recipe for an unsatisfying, unhappy life**. All the research points to that. Know why? Cause **we were made for MORE! Made in the image of our Creator to give and serve others**.

-Now, you can fight that—but all the research—**all of it**—shows that the people who are the healthiest, the happiest and most fulfilled—are those who are generous with their time, their love and their money. It's **just true!**

7. I hope you see how **astounding** this plan is. Just imagine; hundreds of **millions** of people—spread all over the face of the earth—strategically placed by the Spirit of God in every school, business, hospital, Parliament, and every acting guild. Plunked by God into every corporate office, classroom, factory, Walmart...and every Starbucks. And **all** of them with the **power of God flowing through them**--all of them saying, "God, lead me to someone today—to love them, to help them, to listen to them, to just throw a little salt, show a little light."

-Jesus said that this Kingdom—that's what He called this—ininitely good, loving, fair and kind—where He leads as king—is like a little bit of yeast in dough. Know how yeast works? The yeast cells just keep dividing until they penetrate everything: 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, 1024, 2048, 4096, 8192, 16,384, 32,768—by the way, I just did that in my head. Every little cell—filled with God, infinite power—all the salt, light you'll ever need.

- a. It's just a matter of time--***It's just a matter of time.*** It's **hard** to believe—but one day every kingdom will be his. See, when Jesus rose from the dead, the Dictator of this world was toppled. Right now there are lots of pockets of resistance.

-And, truth is, some of those pockets of resistance are in **us**. We just ignore what he's said about being salt and light. Or we're afraid of it. Or we're just lazy—and we just don't feel like helping, giving, or serving. Sometimes, truth is, **our** personal kingdom, and everyone has one, is in total rebellion.

-Jesus, Son of God, **made** everything and **paid** for everything with his life. However, for some reason we don't think He **deserves** to be in charge of it. If that's how **you** feel, why not? Who **does—YOU?** If that's true of you—it's **critical** that you know that your one chance to make a difference and do something **beyond** yourself—is to get your little kingdom into Jesus' hands a.s.a.p. See, sooner or later, it will **all** belong to him. Why not give it to Him—so He can **make** something out of it?

- b. The Olive Branch is all about being totally yielded to Jesus Christ. We are about maximum influence. Friends, when we started, we decided, this church will **not** be about us making better, fatter, more educated Christians.

-**The Olive Branch** is about extending God's offer of peace to the world. It's about us collectively having a **transforming influence** on Markham—and world. It is about pouring salt and spreading light where it is most desperately needed so that everyone has a chance to be transformed. Are you **in?**

8. Out in Nantucket Island, Massachusetts, there's a great little museum that commemorates **The Human Society**-- organized in 1785 to save the lives of people whose ships wrecked not far off shore. The point was to save people from drowning—no matter what the cost was. Their motto was, **You have to go out; you don't have to come back!** Sounds like a catchy slogan for attracting new recruits, doesn't it?

-So, they built these little huts all along the shoreline and manned them with people who would watch the sea. When there was a disaster, groups of them would immediately get into boats and attempt to save as many lives as possible.

- a. Over time, the Coast Guard was founded—and they worked together for a while. But they eventually thought, "Why not let the professionals do it?" So, the little huts stayed—but no one watched, no one went out, no one saved lives.

**This was the last life-boat that sailed.**

-But this little life-saving society couldn't bear to disband, so they stayed together—and preserved their motto: **You have to go out, you don't have to come back.** They still have meetings, give out awards, but no one watches from the shore, no one saves lives anymore. **It's very easy to forget what your mission is all about.**

- b. **That is not an option for us. It never will be.**  
See, Jesus said that we are the only salt on this planet. We are the only light in the world. We are His only plan. And He gives us all his power to do it! And that's great news! But we have to remember—**this is NOT about us!**



-Don't let fear or busyness—or some selfish and pointless pursuit of happiness steal your mission and ruin what God wants to do through your life. See, this mission *is* about being blessed—and finding happiness ... **forever!**

- c. Self—and the **fear of rejection** can totally shut down the calling of God on your life. In fact, if you let this stuff win the day, you will accomplish **nothing** of what God wants to do through you. Why would you let that stuff steal the influence you could have—the opportunity you have to do something that will last **forever?**

-Today we remember Jesus—who wasn't just **rejected and mocked and spit on and called an impostor**—but was nailed to a cross for us. As you come to take communion this morning **LOOK AT THE CROSS!** And say, “Jesus—**please** give me your courage—**your power**—to be salt...and light—and honor **YOU!**”

**That, friends, is your greatest gift to the world! Don't miss your chance to give it!**