

Catford Lectures 2008-2009

Part 12

Speaker	Catford Lectures Conference; Ernest Brown; Paul Dronsfield; Michael Hardt; Nick Fleet; Andrew Poots; Geoff Hawes; Simon Attwood; Hugh Clark; Michael Vogelsang
Place	Catford
Date	01.11.2008
Duration	00:51:31
Online version	https://www.audioteaching.org/en/sermons/ccl001/catford-lectures-2008-2009

Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] This afternoon, while the first speaker was speaking, I was wondering if I should ask you if you have ever been to Germany, and if not, that you don't know what you've missed. But I'm not going to do this, because we are not having a competition of all the beauties of creation.

But I would actually support what he said. I've been to Scotland and could recommend you to go there. It's a beautiful place. But I could even more support what our brother said about the beloved person of our Lord we were dealing with. It is always precious to be occupied with the person of our Lord and Saviour in all his glories.

The message that is on my heart this evening has to do with our walk down here as his disciples. And most of the passages we are going to read are from the mouth of the Lord Jesus, from the one of whom it could be said, who is a teacher like him. So could we turn, first of all, to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 5.

[00:01:15] Matthew's Gospel, chapter 5, verse 13.

Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?

It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Ye are the light of the world, a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick. And it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Then one verse from Mark's Gospel, chapter 9.

[00:02:07] The last verse of the chapter, Mark 9, verse 50.

Salt is good, but if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

And the last scripture from the epistle to the Colossians, chapter 4.

Colossians chapter 4, verse 5.

Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

[00:03:01] Well, I'm sure it was not too difficult to find out what the subject is tonight.

We are going to speak about the typical meaning of salt in the Bible, because all the scriptures we have read speak about salt.

Maybe we could mention an Old Testament example first.

The life of the prophet Elisha.

There was the city of Jericho, and it said this was a beautiful place, but the ground was barren and the waters were bad.

You couldn't drink them. And that's a picture of the world.

Sometimes it gives the impression that it is a nice place.

Even the city in the New Testament mentioned Nihon, which means beautiful, pretty, was a city of death. [00:04:01] They were carrying out a dead man out of this nice place. And Jericho, this beautiful city, was under the curse.

And so the men of the city came to Elisha and said, we couldn't drink the water, it's all barren here.

And Elisha said, bring me a new cruz and put salt in it and put it into the water, and then it was healed.

So we see that Elisha, a picture of Lord Jesus shows that he is there in his grace, the preserving power of grace, that is what the salt speaks about, and he brings it into the situation. And sometime in the millennium, that is what Elisha's picture speaks about, a lot of these curse will be taken away when the Lord is here with his grace and mercy reigning on earth.

But today, the Lord is no longer here, but we are here in the world, and he wants us, as he says in Matthew 5, he wants us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the [00:05:07] world.

So first of all, we may distinguish these two things. It speaks about that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We couldn't change that. We couldn't say, well, we are the salt of the world and the light of the earth. But that wouldn't be true. The Lord uses two different areas.

On the one hand, he speaks about the earth, and on the other hand, he speaks about the world.

So we could say there are two ways we could apply this. On the one hand, the earth speaks a bit about an ordered thing.

It speaks about profession. It speaks about the people that profess his name, the Jews and the time of Lord Jesus, where believers are to be the salt of the earth. We will find that later. [00:06:01] The world is more speaking about men in darkness and as those that are lost who need the light of the gospel.

But we also could make another distinction. The earth, we will see, that speaks about the relationships in which we are according to the creation of God.

We are living as man and wife in marriage.

We are having families. We are living in a school or going to jobs. We are living in a state. And in all these things that are instituted by God originally, man has gone away from what God has told him. But Christians who are living there are the salt of the earth. We will point this out in more detail later on. Actually because Christians are there, they are the salt of the earth. Because this verse does not say ye should be the salt of the earth, but it says ye are [00:07:01] the salt of the earth.

Of course, it speaks about the fact if the salt have lost its savor, it's of no use anymore. But generally speaking, the salt is there as the salt of the earth. On the other hand, the light of the world. So if we put these things side by side, we could first of all speak of the salt is that which preserves and the light is that which illuminates. The salt preserves from evil and light illuminates those that are in darkness.

And this corresponds to the two principles we have found before in Matthew 5 in these Beatitudes.

The salt speaks of the principle of righteousness while the light speaks of the principle of grace. The one speaks about the righteous things that God desires and they should be seen in those Christians and light speaks about the principle of grace that God is going on to [00:08:04] into the darkness to reach men with the testimony of light.

So the salt speaks of this preserving energy of grace in the profession while the light speaks of the activity of love to a lost world that's in darkness. And another great difference is that the salt is working invisible.

If you put salt into something, it gives savor to what you eat and it's in those times when they had no refrigerators and things like that, it was used to keep food, to preserve it from corruption, but it was working invisibly, you couldn't see that, while light is something that is visible. If light shines into the darkness, you will see it.

These are the main distinctions between these two terms. And now the Lord says, ye are the salt of the earth and he says if the salt has lost [00:09:05] its savor, it is good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden underfoot of men.

This is what happened with the Jewish testimony profession, which was not up to what it should have been.

And therefore, it says about them in Luke 21, particularly about Jerusalem, the same words the Lord uses in this verse, in Luke 21, verse 24, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all nations and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled.

They shall be trodden down. That is the word the Lord uses also in this verse.

[00:10:02] They shall be cast out.

If we think about the Christian profession, we might think about Laodicea when he is going to spew it out of his mouth, this profession that had lost all its savor. It was simply a nominal profession with no power anymore.

But we as Christians are living on this earth and we are the salt of the earth.

There is corruption in this world and 2 Thessalonians tells us when the rapture comes, when the Lord Jesus comes and takes us away and no more Christians are on this earth, no more born again believers, then the corruption in this world will go on much faster as we can see it already because there is no longer the Spirit of God here and there is no longer anything that preserves the development of evil, simply by being there and simply by [00:11:01] living according to the principles of God in creation years later.

I would like to go through a few of these different areas we could think about where we as Christians are the salt of the earth.

We could start with the simple fact of the relationship between the different sexes, the relationship between a man and women, what God says about it. There are Christians in this world who say, well, we know that God has designed marriage as the only way where a man and a woman can be united, where they can have any sexual relationship and we want to stay pure till we get married for that moment. This is something that is unknown in the world around where they all live different lifestyles. But there are still those Christian young people living in this world as the salt of [00:12:01] the earth and telling others and showing them what they think are the ideas of God. And simply being there and living a completely different lifestyle from that around you will make an impact on others.

They will notice that. They will probably ask you, why are you living this or that way?

And if they are honest, they will know that you are right and the way they are living is wrong.

I heard from a sister, she told me about a story where she was going to be married and she was very excited about it.

My daughter is going to be married this year, so I know how that is when people get quite excited about it.

I'm still wondering what we are going to talk about after she's married because that is [00:13:02] the main subject that is talked about at the moment. And so she was speaking to her colleagues about this very excitedly and then the colleagues said, why are you so excited about that? It doesn't change anything. Oh, she says, yes, it does change anything. It changes a lot, she said. We are not living

together and we had no relationship before. We are getting married and something new will happen. They started to laugh at her with the exception of one.

And suddenly this one girl cried and said to the others, stop laughing.

I know, she said, you'd rather wish it would be the same with you. And nobody said anything. There was dead silence because they all realized, yes, she was right. They all had lived a life in sin and had found out that it had wounded them.

[00:14:03] One girl, an unbeliever, said, I feel like a can of Coke, opened, drunk up, thrown away.

That is very often the situation.

And so if there are young people living in sin, well, we want to live as the scripture tells us what God has designed in creation, then they are salt of the earth. They have a preserving impact. Others might think, well, I would like to live like that because that is really the thing that the creator has given for men. And we go a step further.

There are husband and wife living in this world, Christians, who live a happy marriage with the Lord in a society where marriages are broken, where people get divorced, and where there's a lot of serious trouble in the world. And there are still those couples that say, well, we live according to God's rules, what [00:15:05] he has laid down in scripture, and we can prove that this is really possible to live such a happy life.

A nephew of mine once told me that he was at school. He was saying he wanted to have a day off because his grandparents were having their golden wedding.

Some of the other pupils didn't even know what that was, and he told them, well, they are married for 50 years.

And one said, for 50 years with the same woman? Yes, of course, they said.

This was so unknown to him, such a situation, he couldn't even think about such a thing happening.

But that is what we should show people as the salt of the earth, that marriage is as God has given it for the blessing of man.

Then there are families, children living in a relationship as God chose us, a loving relationship [00:16:04] of parents and children, parents taking their place of bringing them up in the admonition and love of the Lord, and fear of the Lord, and children being obedient, following them, and living together a good family life, which is also unknown in many places.

I still remember when our children were still at school, very often some of the friends I brought with them from school, they came to us, and they were quite surprised to find a family that had a meal together.

They didn't know anything about that, or no, she said, when we get home, we go to the refrigerator, we take something out of it, we eat it, and everybody goes his way. After having a meal together,

they didn't know about that. And then somebody, the father, giving thanks for the food, I said, what are you doing there? You had to explain to them what you were doing. Giving food, giving thanks for the food.

And some of our Sunday school children who had learned these things at Sunday school, [00:17:04] he went back home and he said to his father, who was an unbeliever, you have to give thanks for the food first before we can start eating. I was not very delighted to hear this, but this was the impression they got. And then the Bible was read at table and other things like that, or a simple hymn was sung. Soul of the earth, families living according to the ideas of God. Let me go to school, or we have a job, how are we working in that as the soul of the earth, in a life where corruption is the order of the day?

The boss says to his secretary, well, you know, if this customer is phoning, tell him I'm not here. And she said, well, sir, you're standing here. I cannot tell anybody you are not here, as long as you are standing here, because that [00:18:02] would be lying. And as a Christian, I have to tell the truth.

A brother told me the other day that one of his customers, he was a businessman, asked him to make a deal with him that was not legally, it would have been a corruption.

And he said, well, he said to me when he told me this, a thought raced through my head, if you do not do that, you will lose this customer. And at the moment of the financial crisis, it would be, he had already lost other customers. But then he said, no, I cannot do that. You know that this is not legally what we are doing. We can't do that. And they were talking for some minutes. And then the other man said, well, I knew you wouldn't do it, because I know your convictions. And he said, well, how serious a damage it would have been if I had agreed on that thing, because he knew exactly I wouldn't do that. [00:19:03] And so, in all these situations in which we are, we are the salt of the earth. There are still people living there in these relationships, according to the ideas of God, trying to preserve evil, to go on even more as it will be when there are no more Christians in this world.

And also, another relationship we may mention is that to our neighbors. We are living together with other people. They are our neighbors. Are we behaving to them in an honest, just way, or are they now as, yeah, well, they are Christians. They go to church every Lord's Day. But during the week, they always quarrel with us about some minor matters. Or are we a testimony to them in honesty and friendliness and kindness, the salt of the earth?

Before we come back to that in the other passages, he now speaks about the light of the world. [00:20:04] The Lord Jesus himself was the light of the world when he was here. He said, I am the light of the world. And in 1 John's epistle, it says that this is a characteristic of God. God is light. And the Lord Jesus was the light of the world, but he's no longer here. But we, as his disciples, we as Christians, we are still here. And he says to them, you are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

If a city is on a hill, everybody can see it. And he said, that's the situation you are in as Christians in this world. It's dark and it's getting darker.

And in our days, we realize how dark it is getting. But there's still this light there, the light of the world. That shine as a testimony to a lost world that is always getting darker.

And in this verse, it speaks, first of all, together with the parallel verse I'm going [00:21:02] to read, we

find that there are three hindrances to the light and two effects we find in the scripture.

Here in our verse in Matthew 5 verse 15, it says, neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel.

That is what is mentioned here in Matthew 5. But there is a parallel verse to this in another gospel in Luke 8, where it speaks about two other things. So, I'm going to read that verse, Luke 8 verse 16.

No man, when he has lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed, but setteth it on a candlestick, the day which enter in may see the light. So we have three things, a vessel, a bushel, and a bed under which the light could be put, [00:22:03] and so the effect of the light is darkened.

The vessel in scripture very often is used to speak about a person, to signify the person.

Paul is a vessel for the Lord when we use it, and 2 Timothy speaks about different vessels of honor and dishonor, always meaning persons with that. So one thing is that our own person could be a hindrance that the light is shining. If we put our own person in the first place, then the light will not shine, because we want to attract all the attention on us. Those that were in Martylsham, Brother Bell has mentioned it already, where we had Isaiah 42, it says about the Lord Jesus that he was not crying on the street and letting his voice be heard.

And we spoke about the matter that this does not mean, of course, that the Lord was not [00:23:03] talking in the open to people and they could understand him, of course he did that, but he was not attracting this special attention to himself. He was very often telling people whom he had healed, he was often telling them, do not tell this to other people, just to make him popular. And when Peter came to him after the Lord had withdrawn, Peter came to him and said, everybody is looking for you. And the Lord did not say, oh, how wonderful, but he said, let's go to other places, because I have to preach there as well. And when his brothers, according to the flesh, said to him, if you want to be known, go to Jerusalem and show thyself to everybody. Nobody is doing things in secret if he wants to be made publicly known. That was not what the Lord wanted. His brothers did not understand him. And so it could also happen with us that we want to be prominent and then we are putting the light under a vessel. [00:24:02] We will be seen, but not the light. Then there is these two other things, the bushel, which was used for measuring corn. If you put a light under it, it's no longer seen, and in the end it will be extinguished, these oil lamps.

And then there was the bed under which somebody put this light. This is, of course, speaking about two opposite dangers. The one, the bushel speaks of busyness, and the bed speaks of laziness, or we could use some modern terms.

The one speaks of burnout, and the other speaks of bore-out. You may, on the one hand, be so busy with your work or whatever that you have no time that the light might shine. Or you may be so much occupied with doing nothing, with relaxing, and that there is no energy left for witnessing on the Lord. That's the bed.

Both things, the Lord says, it would be stupid for somebody who was lighting a candle. [00:25:04] In those days, they didn't have light like we have here, but these were oil lamps, and they had to be put on a candlestick somewhere on the wall so that it could be seen, and there was some light.

If you did it under a vessel, a bushel, or a bed, it would not be seen. No, he says, be careful.

Ye are the light of the world, yes, but be careful that the light could be seen. Ye are the salt of the earth, but be careful that there is any power that it is not losing its savor and is of no use. The same is with the light. But if you put the light on the candlestick, if it is to be seen, then it has a double effect as well. In Matthew 5, it says, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

And if you remember again what Luke said in Luke 8, 16, it says, he put it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

[00:26:05] There are those in the house that see the light, and there are those that enter in that see the light.

First of all, I would apply that personally.

First there is your house, your family that you have, and the light is going to shine in that place first of all. If you have a family, if you have children, they should see something of the light of the gospel.

They are living in this dark world, and where should they find the gospel? Where should they see this light, if not in their own homes? But there are also those that enter in, people with whom you come into contact, people, your neighbors, your colleagues, those you work with, or whatever, they enter in, maybe not literally entering into your house, but entering into your circumstances, into your life at [00:27:01] some place and time.

People come into contact with you. They enter in, so to say, and the question is if they can see something of that light. I'm sure we all know situations where we have met people, and afterwards we had to confess that there was a chance of bringing the gospel to them, but we didn't take the chance. We let it go on these people. We maybe never see them again. In such a time and period, they crossed our lives. They entered in, so to say, into our lives, and they should see this light that is shining. But we also could apply this a bit more to, in general, the house may speak of those profession, of those Christians, the family of God.

The light should shine in the inner circle, so to say, so that they may see the truth [00:28:01] of the scriptures.

Paul was coming to, was wanted to come to the Romans to bring them the gospel. Of course they were saved, but the light of the truth of the gospel should also be brought to those that have accepted it, to be strengthened and brought up in these truths. But also, again, there are those that enter in, those that are not yet Christians, those that are without, who need the gospel. They should be brought into contact with the light that brings, makes everything clear, that should convince them of the darkness that is in their lives.

So there is the light that shines in the house, and for all that enter in.

And so the Lord says, let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. [00:29:03] The first half of the sentence might sound a bit strange. When the Lord says, let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works. Do we really should attract attention to our good works? Maybe we could, in concerning this good

works, one thing I would like to turn to is Ephesians. In Ephesians chapter 5, in verse 9, and I'm going to read it from the new translation of Mr. Darby, 5 verse 9, for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.

So if the light is shining, there is also a fruit of life which will be seen in righteousness, in goodness, in truth. There will be works as a result, as a fruit of light that will be seen.

[00:30:07] And if these good works are brought forth, the attention will not be brought to ourselves, not to those that do them. There will be a natural result coming out of the life of the saints. And the result will be, as the Lord says here, glorify your Father which is in heaven. The glory will be to God the Father, not to us. These are works that point to the Father as the origin of them and the glory will be given to God.

How wonderful that would be if the light could shine and men as a result would glorify God which is in heaven when they see the light shining in the darkness.

If we now turn to the second passage in Mark's Gospel, chapter 9, it also dealt with the [00:31:03] same subject, this last verse of Mark, chapter 9, about the salt losing its saltiness.

But then in the end, the last sentence, I would like to point out, have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another.

This is one of those sentences in the Bible which we sometimes would like to be the other way around. If it would say, have peace in yourselves and have salt one with another, we would have no difficulty in putting that into practice, to have peace with ourselves and trying to tell others what's wrong with them. But that is not what this scripture says. It says, have salt in yourselves, which speaks of self-judgment, which speaks of that this preserving energy should be first of all acted on ourselves, trying to find out if there's [00:32:09] anything evil in us that should be corrected and therefore there's salt is there, and have peace one with another.

This salt, which speaks about something that is critical of evil, is not in contradiction to having peace.

It does not mean that we are unfriendly toward each other. We will come to that in a minute, how we should behave in these matters. But here he says, first of all, salt, you should put that, first of all, you should have that in yourself that in your own life, salt, evil would not find its place and have peace one with another.

We all know that we are much faster in finding out what others are doing wrong than what we ourselves are doing wrong. [00:33:02] But scripture says, start with yourself and then the other thing will find its place. And that is what we have read in Colossians, in this epistle where the Apostle Paul uses the same typical picture of salt when he says in verse 5 of chapter 4, Colossians chapter 4 verse 5, walk in wisdom toward them that are without.

First of all, the Apostle speaks about walking and not about talking.

He comes to talking in the next verse, but first he speaks about walking, because if our life is in contradiction to what we say, it's no use of saying anything.

He said, start with walking, which means leading your life in wisdom toward them that are without.

[00:34:06] So there are definitely and clearly marked two groups, those that are within and those that are without.

Those that are without are the unbelievers, those that are not saved, they are without. Those that have accepted the Lord Jesus, they are within. And the Bible tells us quite clearly that there is nothing in between. You must know if you are within or without.

Once I spoke to a woman, if she was saved, if she wanted to be baptized, I said, are you saved?

Do you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior? Yes, she said. I said, how do you know that? How? She said, oh, I feel that. Well, this was not very much to base your salvation on, just a feeling.

She didn't really know if she was saved, if she was within or without, and the Lord [00:35:04] wants to make it clear to people if they are within or without.

But we are living among people that are still without, and he says, you should walk in wisdom toward them because you are influencing them, the unbelievers, one way or the other, and we need wisdom for that.

We need really to know how to walk, how to act towards individuals. We come in the next verse when he speaks about our words, we have this thing, and he says, redeeming the time, or Mr. Darby translates, redeeming opportunities.

The Greek language has two words for time, in English and in German, we've only one, but the Greeks have two for time. One word, the Greek word *chronos*, from which our word *chronology* or *chronological* comes, [00:36:05] means time, that is, one thing is happening after the other in a chronological order. But the other word, *kairos*, means an opportunity, time as an opportunity for doing something, and that is the word that is used here, therefore Mr. Darby translates it with *redeeming opportunities*. There is a time where there is an opportunity for us to do something, maybe this time will never come again, and he says, the time when you are living now in this world before the Lord comes is the time, is the opportunity you should redeem in connection to those that are without.

Walking in wisdom, and if you speak to them, let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.

He says, the speech of the believer should have, so to say, these, as a recipe, these two ingredients, grace and salt.

[00:37:05] Again, this verse, we practice sometimes the other way around. Let your speech be always with salt, seasoned with grace. So we are talking to people, criticizing them, and maybe at the end we have a graceful word for them, but it is the other way around. The main thing in our speaking should be grace, and it should be seasoned with salt. Salt is not done into your food in a great amount of it, because that would destroy everything, but if it is the right amount, it will make it better, the meal.

And he says, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man, or in the new translation, each one.

We must understand that the people we are coming into contact with, they are all individuals. [00:38:02] Each one is an individual, and he says, you may know how ye ought to answer each one. He does not say, you should know what ye ought to answer, or that's quite clear what we should answer, the truth of God, of course, the gospel, but he says, how ye should answer each one. To find out what is the right thing in this particular case, which I might point out to him.

There are so many verses, so many passages in the Bible we can use to bring the gospel to someone, and it's not in the way the Lord or Paul is saying you cannot learn five verses by heart and throw them at everyone who comes along if it is the right one or not, but really ask the Lord to have wisdom to apply the right thing in the right way, and you should do this with grace and seasoned with salt.

Grace, as has been said, grace opens the heart and salt reaches the conscience.

[00:39:07] But to reach the conscience of somebody, you must first open his heart, that he is willing to accept what you are going to say to him.

This afternoon, the first speakers said that when the Lord Jesus spoke to these officers who should bring them, they had said, never spoke a man like this, and the people wondered about the words of grace that came out of his mouth. So if we want to know how does that work, grace, speech, always with grace, seasoned with salt, if we want to know how that works, we should study the life of Lord Jesus. How he was dealing when he was here on earth, how he was dealing with men. You always find that he speaks with them with grace to open their hearts, but sometimes [00:40:01] at the right moment, there was the salt that should reach their consciences. I just give two examples from the many examples you could find in the New Testament.

There is this scene in John's Gospel, chapter three, the Lord Jesus at night, and there comes Professor Nicodemus, and he comes at night, and he was knocking at the door of the Lord Jesus.

I don't know if you have made experiences like this, that somebody at the night was knocking at your door, or the phone was ringing, and I don't know how we would react in such a situation.

If somebody says to me in the middle of the night, well, I would like to talk to you. So what did the Lord say to Nicodemus? [00:41:01] Did he say, well, Nicodemus, you are a real coward. Why did you come in the middle of the night, and not at daylight, as all decent people would come? No, he didn't say that, of course. But he invited Nicodemus in, and he was speaking with him about the new life, to be born again.

But then, during the conversation, this intellectual skeptic, Nicodemus, said to the Lord Jesus, Lord, how shall this happen, with the new birth? Shall I go once again into the womb of my mother, or how do you explain this thing? And then Lord Jesus took the salt. He said to Nicodemus, you are the teacher of Israel, and don't know these things. Nicodemus, you are the teacher of Israel.

You are the theological expert in Jerusalem, and you don't know about this? [00:42:01] Have you not read in the Old Testament, in the prophet Ezekiel, for example, what it says about a new birth?

This is nothing new, I'm going to tell you. It's something that is already in the Old Testament. I'm going to tell you something new, but how will you understand that if you don't understand the things that are already in the Old Testament? And we know from the development that Nicodemus' heart was reached by the grace of the Lord, so that the salt really got through to his conscience. And some chapters later, when the council was gathering against the Lord Jesus, there was this Nicodemus raising his voice for the Lord.

Not very boldly, but at least he said something. He said, well, is it normal in our society to judge someone before we have heard him?

And they all criticize him and say, well, look in the Scriptures and find out that there's [00:43:05] no profit from Galilee and other things.

And so Nicodemus is silent again.

But then, when this moment came, after the Lord Jesus had died, when it was really dangerous to stand up for the Lord, there he was, together with Joseph of Arimathea, they went to Pilate and begged for the Lord's body and buried him. So we know that he was really a believer.

Second example, we just have to go a chapter further in John's Gospel, chapter 4. There comes a woman to the well, and the Lord Jesus speaks to her in grace.

She was surprised that he spoke to her at all, a man to a woman in public, a very unusual for a Jew.

And then she was a Samaritan, and she said, why is he talking to me?

[00:44:07] This was the grace of his voice. And then she was talking with him, and he was talking about this water, that if you drink that water, it will fill your heart, and all the thirst of your soul will be quenched forever.

And this woman, who had drank at all the wells of this world, and she was still thirsty, she realized that he was offering something that she didn't have, something she really wanted to have, and her heart was really open. And then the salt again.

The Lord had to use the salt also to reach her conscience, and he said to her, bring your husband.

And she said, well, I have no husband. And the Lord said, yes, you are right. You have no husband. Five husbands you've had. And the one with whom you are living together now, you are not married with him. [00:45:03] And later she said, I have met a man who has taught me all my life. She really, what the Lord had to say to her was really a very critical point, but it didn't hurt her.

It didn't drive her away, because he had spoken to her first of all in grace, and she really had the desire to get the answer, and so he could also use the salt. And that is the example the Lord is giving us. If we are dealing with men that are without, we want to bring the grace of God to them, but of course we have to use the salt to show them that they are sinners, to show them that there is something they have to confess. But have we opened their hearts with grace?

And it's also true when we deal with each other as saints. There may be things we have to talk about

in the life of a believer. [00:46:02] We have to point out something maybe, but in what way are we doing that? Is there the grace in our speech so that the other knows, well, this brother loves me, this sister loves me, and I have confidence to him. And when then in such a conversation we use the salt in the right amount to point out something in the life of the other that may be not right, then we may experience the same thing the Lord has shown us, that he realizes, yes, he's right. There are things in my life that I have to change. But if we are not taking an interest in each other, and just go to somebody to tell him what is wrong with him, and we have never taken an interest in him before, there will be no real effect in what we do. The other one will not really listen to what we say. But as soon as we are able to speak with others in grace, seasoned with salt, then the Lord [00:47:06] can show us how we ought to answer each one.

It's not only what we have to say, but also how we say it, in what words we bring it before them, the love of God.

So we have seen that the Lord has said, we as Christians, we are the salt of the earth in all the relationships in which we are. We are that because we are here in this world. As long as we are here, we are the salt of the earth. But the responsible question is, have we lost our savor, or are we still living in all these relationships as the Lord wants us to live, to preserve corruption in these fields? And we are also the light of the world. As long as we are here, we are the light of the world. But there's also a responsibility to let the light shine, not to put it under a vessel, under a bushel, under a bed, but to let it shine to those that are in the house and to [00:48:03] those that come in, with the effect and result that in the end they may glorify your Father who is in heaven.

So we sing in closing, hymn 78, Lord, while we wait the moment when we shall see thy face, we daily prove the sweetness of thy sustaining grace, yet daily find the comfort of thine unfailing love, till we shall know its fullness when with thee, Lord, above. Hymn 78.

Lord, while we wait the moment when we shall see thy face, we daily prove the sweetness of thy sustaining grace, yet daily find the comfort of thine unfailing love, till we shall [00:49:22] know its fullness when with thee, Lord, above.

And yet while in the desert mountains do we roam, as on the homeward journey, thou mixt our hearts to thine, [00:50:03] the living water flowing from life's perennial spring, the daily manna coming, fresh praises daily bring, and thou, both on thanksgiving, show me the tomb of love, as we survey the crossway which led to thee above, there in the light of sunlit, where you see how great thy name, [00:51:14] please watch now every footstep, till we thy rest should share.