

Kingdom Influencers Part 1

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[0 : 00] Let's pray together. Father, thank you. You are a merciful God. You are our only Savior. Your kingdom does not come on Air Force One.

It comes in your King and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom. There we see your kingdom reigning and you saving and delivering.

Bless your people. Bless everyone under the sound of my voice that we would know Jesus and find all the wholeness we need in him.

Now we come to your word, Holy Father. Will you bless the preaching of your word? Will you cause your word to go down deep in all of our hearts? Let no one leave unscathed.

May the sword of the Spirit do his holy work and divide our soul and spirit and get to the joint and the marrow. May your word do the holy surgery in our hearts and transform us.

[1 : 14] Thank you for your love. Thank you that we are safe in your presence. The safest place for sinners is with Jesus. And thank you.

Thank you. Use your unworthy servant now to proclaim the riches and the mystery of Christ. In his name, amen.

Matthew chapter 5. I'm going to read verses 13 through 16, which is the entire section, but we're only going to be focusing on verse 13.

Hear now the word of God. You are the salt of the earth. But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

[2 : 18] Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand. And it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Amen. That is the word of the Lord. Thanks for the Lord. Please be seated. Thank you, praise team. Thank you, brother. Thank you.

You know, it's this funny thing that's been happening over the last, I don't know, decade or so.

We hear a lot of talk about influencers. I think I wasted my time in school getting degrees.

I could have been an influencer. Some are famous, like Beyonce or Kim Kardashian, Jay-Z or Taylor Swift.

[3 : 26] We all know those names. But many influencers are names you would not know. They are young in their 20s. They are rich. And they have huge followings.

When I was a kid, children wanted to be a doctor or a lawyer or a policeman or a fireman or an astronaut. Now we hear more and more kids want to be influencers.

What does that mean? It means you write a blog or have a YouTube channel or a TikTok channel or X account, Instagram or Pinterest platform.

And you get to express your ideas about fashion preferences or dance. People even lip sync and become famous.

I mean, really, lip syncing? I can do that. Lip syncing and they share their thoughts about politics and finance, self-care, anything.

[4 : 29] And they end up influencing thinking and trends around the world and make a lot of money.

Calls me. They don't have to even leave their home in their mom's basement influencing the world. No wonder people want to be influencers, right?

But that's always been the case. People have always wanted to be influencers. But now we have the opportunity to do it on such a magnificent scale.

But here's the thing, brothers and sisters. In the kingdom of God, we have the influence of what Jesus calls salt and light.

This means that all of the Lord's people are influencers. You may never get a TikTok channel, but you don't need one.

[5 : 37] If you are a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, you are an influencer. You see, kingdom works done in kingdom character for the glory of the king influences the world.

And a kingdom-focused people means a kingdom-focused church. Influence. Singularly and together.

Influence. So I guess the question really is, how effective are we? Let me get personal.

How effective are you by the grace of God? What is your influence like? These verses are so often taken out of context.

And we tend to focus really on the impact. We tend to focus. Certainly, you see the Great Commission here. This is how we do the Great Commission, right?

[6 : 47] This is how we make disciples of the nations. It is through influence. But so often we focus on the doing of influence and we forget the being of influence.

And that's what this passage is really about. Because you have to take what comes before it to understand it. Salt and light doesn't happen by accident.

It happens as the people of God displayed the character of the king. We are those who are poor in spirit. We are those who mourn over our sin. We are those who are meek.

We are, you see? We are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. We are peacemakers.

That's what makes us salt and light. And don't forget the last thing.

I didn't mention all of them, but don't forget the last thing. We are the persecuted. It's funny that that is the last thing our Lord says before he says we're salt and light.

[7 : 47] But those things, those attributes, those marks of the kingdom, of the kingdoms of the king's people, are what make us salt and light.

Too often we focus on being political influences and social justice influence without asking Jesus to develop his character in us so we become kingdom influencers.

Because, well, listen, listen, let's be honest. Without the marks of Christ's character in us, all the good that we do in social justice, in politics, in the community, all the good that we do just makes us look like every other lobbying and do-gooder nonprofit group.

Without the character, that's all we end up being. There's something unique about the people of the king.

As we go into the world to do good, as we go into the world to bring his influence, there's something unique about us. Now, listen carefully. I'm not saying there's a biblical or a Christian way to dig a well for those who need water.

[9 : 17] Dig it. Get a backhoe, whatever it takes. There's nothing you... However, what's different... What's different is why we're digging it.

What's different is our ultimate goal. Ultimate goal. Short-term goal. Supplying people with water. Long-term goal. Ultimate goal. Most important goal. To glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and make him known.

Thank you. Somebody's out there. There's a difference. Yes. But Jesus warns us that salt and light will be persecuted.

You know why? Because if you have an open wound, salt stings. If you're not used to light, light hurts.

[10 : 28] And can even blind. So let's talk about this. Kingdom salt, first of all, affects cultures.

Cultures. Now, I think I may not have been clear enough on this subject. You hear me talk about the culture. Right?

The culture. You've heard me say that phrase, the culture, many times. And I want you to be clear about something. Every country has a culture and then many subcultures in it.

A key mark of American culture is what? Just toss one out. What's a key mark of American culture? See? Diversity.

And somebody say what? Live long. Oh. Oh. Oh. That's true. And we don't mean soccer.

[11 : 30] Here's one for you. Freedom. America is about freedom.

We use that word all the time. We talk about freedom of choice, freedom of religion, freedom of speech. Freedom. That's a mark of American culture and a very important mark.

Every country has a culture. European, Japanese, Chinese, Iranian, Guatemalan, African. Every culture, every country has a culture. But what is culture?

What is culture? I like Andy Crouch's definition the best. He says, culture is what we make of the world. What we make of creation.

There are two senses to culture here. Because we bear God's image, we create. We take what is given to us and make something else. Secondly, it is the sense we make of the world.

[12:33] In other words, we give meaning and interpretation to the world. We talk about why there's an understanding of why there are two genders.

Marriage. We give understanding and interpretation. What is marriage? Sexual expression. Human identity. We give meaning and understanding and interpretation. What those things mean. Mean. And he says the two senses go together. And he just summarizes this way. We make sense of the world by making something of the world.

We make sense of the world by making something of the world. We take what God has given. He's given us creation.

And in that creation, we do something with it. We can't invent matter. God did when he said, let there be. We take matter.

[13:29] We take what he has given. What he has created out of nothing. And we do something with it. It's wonderful. That's culture. We are creating.

We are doing things with what God has given us. And it's because we're made in the image of God. That's what we do because we bear his image.

We take and make. But the problem is, all of it is still falling. We make good things, but then they become ultimate things.

We do things, but sometimes we do them selfishly, even though what we're doing might be good. We take our freedom, which is something we cherish, but then we use our freedom selfishly.

And so it's all about my freedom, not yours. And if your freedom meets my freedom, my freedom will win because I'll make it so.

[14:37] You see, freedom is a good thing. But then sin enters. It's fallen. That's why American culture, no matter what we do, will always be fallen.

Flawed. And at times, ugly and dangerous. But under American culture, there are many subcultures.

Hip-hop culture, millennial culture, art culture, just Chattanooga culture. African-American culture, white culture, Caribbean-American culture.

Listen, your workplace or your school has a culture. And it's into those places of culture, cultures that we are called.

But like I said, there's a reality that covers all cultures in darkness. And it's called the world. The world system.

[15:54] Love not the world, we are told by the Apostle John. You see, when I talk about the culture, not cultures, the culture, I'm talking about the world.

But when you hear me say that phrase, Pastor Kevin, when he says, the culture, he's talking about the world. The world system, that way of thinking, living, and worship that leaves God out, that rejects him, and will not be redeemed.

But will be destroyed when Jesus comes. The world system. Not the world of human beings. Not just that. The world system.

That's what John warns us about. You see, Jesus tells us in a wonderful passage that you all know, like John 17.

You remember this passage. Jesus is praying in John 17, the true Lord's Prayer here. In John 17, 14 through 19. I think it'll be on the screen. Jesus says, I have, he says to the Father, I have given them your word.

[17:01] And the world, the world system, has hated them because they are not of the world. Just as I am not of the world.

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world. They are not of the world. Just as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them. That set them apart as holy in the truth. Your word is truth. And you sent me into the world. So I have sent them into the world.

And for their sake, I consecrate myself that they also may be sanctified in truth. Jesus says that he sends us into the darkness.

He sends us his people into this place called the world. The world system that he's not of it and neither are we.

[18:10] But we're in it. Because he was in it. And in the midst of the darkness of the culture or the world system, God is at work.

Through his people. And for his glory. Satan is called in 1 John 5.19 the God of this world. Not of the earth.

Of the world system. That place where you and I are called to go. It is this place of Satan's domain that Jesus has triumphed.

Triumphed. In that very place where he was rejected. In that very place where God has said, I don't need him. I don't need that crutch. In that very place Jesus goes.

And wins the day. And in his victory we come behind him. Into that very place of danger.

[19:17] Into that very place of disrespect and dishonor to our Savior. Here we go. Here we go. And we will find victory in him.

In that same place. Because it's in the world that he rescues people. People trapped in the kingdom of darkness. That is where he brings them out.

Like he brought you out. Each one of you who knows Jesus as Savior and Lord. Where did he find you? He found you in the world. Right. And he set you free.

Not so you can run and hide. But so that you can now bring his saltiness.

His character. His power. His presence. His light even. Into that dark place.

[20:19] His light. You see. This is where we're called to be salt and light. And in this place. The impact will be felt. Within all the subcultures.

That we go. So whatever culture you find yourself in. Academia. Banking. Walmart culture.

Wherever you find yourself. That's where he wants to use you. That's where he wants you.

Even your family. Has a culture. When I say. Daddy. What goes through your mind?

It depends. On the culture. Of the family. Where you grew up. If. If. Your father was present.

[21:17] And kind. And caring. And providing. You have warm feelings. But if your daddy. Was absent.

Abusive. Addicted. Uncaring. A shudder went through your soul. Depends on the culture.

That you grew up in. And even there. God saves. Even there. Even there.

He saves. That you might affect that culture. As long as you're there. Salt and light. Are the natural. Are the natural. Spiritual consequences.

Of kingdom character. But kingdom salt. Is small. But potent. Small. But potent.

[22:18] Salt was a common compound. In ancient world. It was highly valued. Harry Walls.

Makes the. Theologian. At Damascus University. Says. The Greeks. Considered salt.

Divine. The Romans. The Romans. Created a jingle. There's nothing more useful. Than salt. It was called white gold. Because of its purity. And value. Taxes. And wages.

Were often paid. With salt. Especially to Roman soldiers. A negligent. Or dishonorable. Soldier.

Was not worth. His salt. He did not live.

Or fight. In a worthy way. One of the greatest. Compliments. You could give others. Was to call them. The salt. Of the earth. It meant they were living.

In a worthy way. They were. They were helpful. And useful. They were solid citizens. And their lives. Counted for something meaningful. You see. It was also used.

[23:14] For specific purposes. As you know. Flavoring food. In that culture. Without refrigeration. It was a preservative. For pure. It was used for purifying. Creating thirst.

Even one case. We have. In the scriptures. Of it being. Used for hygienic purposes. Here's the thing. Today. Sodium chloride.

Which is our salt. Is very. A very stable compound. Very stable. Doesn't. Doesn't just. Just. Even.

Even if you dissolve it. It's still. It's still. It's flavors. It doesn't just disappear.

But in our Lord's time. The Jewish people. Dug their salt. Out of the Dead Sea. In blocks. Tiny. Break it up.

Tiny. Tiny. But you didn't need much. For it to. If. For it to be effective. Jesus says. His true.

[24:08] Kingdom. Disciples. Are salt. Listen. Not will be salt. You are. The salt.

If you. Are his. If you've been born again. You don't become salt. You are salt. Christ. Right. Right. His character's in you. His spirit is in you.

You are salt. St. Ferguson. In his commentary. On the Sermon on the Mount. Says. Christians may seem small. And insignificant. powerless in a power mass society yet they have the ability to influence every segment of it and to permeate the whole.

Salt is cheap. Its value is minimal. But salt has unusual properties that far exceeds its value. You don't have to be a big shot in the kingdom of God.

To be salt that affects all around you. You don't have to have a lot of money in the kingdom of God. You don't have to have a big name as an influencer.

[25 : 22] You don't have to know anybody other than Jesus. For him to make you an influential salty person.

Jesus said Paul says we have we have the treasure of the gospel in jars of clay. We are the clay and clay is cheap.

What makes clay what makes the jar of clay so powerful? the treasure that's in it. The treasure who is Christ.

His gospel. His truth living in us. We are powerful. Do you know who you are? We forget.

We mope around and walk around defeated as if we have no we can do nothing. He does everything and we are with him. We are with him.

[26 : 29] And sometimes that influence of salt have you noticed salt disappears in your food? If you can see it you put too much in there. But leave it there long enough it will dissolve.

Salt is invisible once it gets into the food but man the impact is there. I mean what would McDonald's french fries be without salt?

I mean please be more like some of these other restaurants. Invisible but influential. So what impact does the Lord's kingdom salt have in this world?

What impact should we have? We permeate whatever you put us in we permeate we flavor wherever you find us in your in your school your flavor UTC your chat state flavor wherever you work Unum Amazon Volkswagen it don't matter flavor you're in there you bring the kingdom to bear and you flavor every situation with the the savior the taste of Christ Ferguson again says Christians whose lives exhibit the qualities of the blessed will have a preserving impact upon a society that if left to itself will rot and deteriorate without the influence of the gospel society will suffer moral decay and become putrid that is unfit for the consumption of good men and women without the presence of Christ in his people the wheels go off and society just goes down and down and down so some examples when discussing marriage or sexuality like I mentioned before or politics our Christian character flavors that discussion or do we look like everybody else those those

Democrats they want to destroy America those Republicans want to take away our freedoms because that's some of the dumbest things I've heard people say you know why because Republican Democrats live here too and their children live here too and their grandchildren live here too they don't want to destroy America or take away freedoms because their children live here too now it doesn't mean both sides are right it doesn't mean that at all it just means that when we come into that discussion are we dealing with the issues or attacking people are we bringing a kingdom alternative to the discussion or are we quoting the party line that's the problem we quote too many Christians quote the party line we say exactly what everybody else is saying and with the same attitude of disgust that's not salt that's darkness that's the world when are we going to wake up saints and realize who we are unless we're not unless we're not who we say we are and think about and remember this it may sting the salt of Christ in you may sting those who are wounded in their hearts by sin and pain and selfishness it may sting them and they will lash out sometimes knee jerk reaction get you away from me cancel fire limit alright but for some that salt will bring purification and thirst for the Christ in you and his kingdom and for a better way of living that's it for salt

[31 : 53] I'm confused I really am because I don't think we're salt as much as we should be maybe maybe it's what Jesus says kingdom salt can become ineffective you know there's so much salt in the dead sea that you can't sink I had a picture of me swimming in the dead sea thank god we didn't show that but well on the beach anyway but you really can't sink it's so dense I mean I'm out there just it was amazing me and Tim Tinsley we were floating around he had a big cigar in his mouth it's it's the nature of the salt because the the salt from the dead sea though could become contaminated with minerals and sand and so it wasn't as salty as it could be it became good for nothing thrown out thrown on the road trampled down people walked on it here's the question can a

true disciple of

Jesus become so contaminated that they are ineffective for his kingdom wow I don't think so limited effectiveness yes totally ineffective because you are salt no but limited yes but you know who can become totally ineffective the nominal Christian the person whose name is Jesus but life doesn't match up to the name of Jesus that person will be trampled I hope that's not anyone here our Lord tells us and warns us in chapter 7 in chapter 7 of this very wonderful sermon I'm almost done in chapter 7 he warns us about that kind of disciple and I want to share with you because it's important chapter 7 verse 21 now everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but the one who does the will of my father who is in heaven on that day many will say to me Lord Lord did we not prophesy in your name cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name then I will declare to them I never knew you depart from me you workers of lawlessness that's that's the disciple the fake disciple who is religious but have no relationship with Jesus he serves in the church she sings in the choir they did as a couple but they're not Saul they're religious and Jesus says you're not doing your life is not according to my word you're not living my word you're not doing what I'm telling you to do so therefore you demonstrate that you don't know me it is cast out

Jesus says and people walk on it may God keep us all from that you see what he's saying to us is just like sodium chloride is a stable compound today in our salt to be effective we must be a stable kingdom people we must be faithfully present faithful to him but present in every culture to which the Lord sends us we must recognize that our stability comes by faith through our union with Christ and we build on that by his grace as we grow in our relationship with him by his word and spirit Christ is our stability knowing

Christ is our stability loving Christ because he first loved us is our stability the spirit working through the word not you the spirit working through the word transforming making our character reflect more of the beatitudes look more like Jesus that is the spirit stabilizing you in the kingdom that salt can't lose this saltiness it can't because the Lord stabilizes it oh I'm going to wrap this up couple application questions or thoughts as the Lord's kingdom salty people we can interact with the world in a number of ways just ask yourself where you are we can seek to not engage the world at all create our own

[37 : 34] Christian ghetto our own Christian bubble everything Christian Christian debt I go to Christian Walmart I go to Christian clubs I go to Christian everything Christian and we just live in a bubble don't you understand that both salt and light images imply involvement in the culture if the salt remains in the salt shaker it doesn't have an effect there are a lot of Christians doing that by the way what about this one we can spend our time raging against and complaining about how bad the world is how bad the other party is we'll talk more about this when we get to light but this is but but because we do critique the world yes we do but if all we do is complain about how bad the world is we end up becoming angry self-righteous and repulsive people and so the empire strikes back doesn't it but not because we are salty but because we are obnoxious and nasty we can follow we can follow the world in order to win it we enter various cultures and get amnesia concerning kingdom values because we're still intoxicated with the glitz and glitter a pastor in New

York just felt destroyed his ministry because he wanted to be the pastor to the stars so we end up looking just like the world in the name of Jesus I don't mean just in the way we dress either but in how we act and live and the salt has lost his saltiness or we could interact with the world in this last one like salt and food we can permeate the world system and create cultures create art create institutions and businesses government technology and demonstrate in doing it Christ's perspective on these areas because listen when we do them they bear the mark of our kingdom character in creating them your business bears the mark even if you don't call it a

Christian Walmart you don't have to but create a business and operate it on kingdom principles demonstrate caring for your employees and those who work with you and for you demonstrate Christ's character and how you go about your business and your work there the salt may look invisible haha but it's having an effect I'm not saying it's wrong to call it a Christian thing I'm not saying you don't have to and we can influence worldly cultures and make them less rotten can't Christianize them because it's the world the world can't be Christianized it will be destroyed but there is light and salt coming in having an effect Greg Foster put it this way

Christian influence on culture occurs not primarily by human design but by God's invisible and supernatural use of the suffering presence of his people in their positions of public stewardship in all

domains of culture did you catch that I'm sorry I was on the screen I just want you to understand sometimes the greatest impact your life will have is as you suffer in Jesus name in the midst of a subculture you just heard your job is being phased out your whole department is being phased out everybody is cussing and mad and threatening to sue what do you look like come on people I'm trying to just I'm being practical here how do you look your candidate doesn't win and everybody's walking around like the world

I never forget I was in seminary and candidate won and my whole professors and everybody was walking around like this the world is doomed we're doomed America is doomed it's all over and I'm looking at them going I thought you were Christians I thought there's a bigger kingdom I thought if my candidate doesn't win you're gonna see me show up in church hallelujah because my king is still reigning okay I'm done I'm done I'm done I started enough trouble you can send me the email it's okay you send me an email I'll be laughing as I read it no I'm joking I won't be laughing that's a joke I'll call you back and we'll talk and if I'm wrong I'll say it but I'm not salt be salt brothers and sisters be who you are in

[43 : 36] Jesus name and don't back down from it let him use you wherever you are pray that his character will be seen in you in whatever situation you're in if you look like the world you will get the world's reward if you look like Christ the world might not like you it won't but some in the world will be drawn and more than anything else Jesus will be exalted and he will touch whatever you're in with his presence his holiness his grace you'll be surprised at what he does father oh lord thank you for your word and make us true salt help us to live like it deliver us lord from the contamination that the world brings lord we

I know I know we can't be fully delivered from it in this life because we're still sinful but lord help us you said Jesus prayed that we'd be sanctified by the truth and his word is true sanctify us by your word and remove more and more contaminants out of our lives so that our salty lives that are full of your glory and your presence and your character will touch families will touch communities will touch governments will touch jobs will touch everything around us that Jesus might be seen in his name exalted no matter what that means for us help us lord in his name we pray amen amen amen amen yea ben ya ha men lagi 61yi ma ah so