

OpenTheo

Salt of the Earth



Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

In his message, Steve Gregg discusses the significance of Christians being called the "salt of the earth" by Jesus in the Bible. He explains that Christianity has a unique moral genius that can combat corruption in society and that it is up to believers to exercise moral control in their communities. While the influence of Christianity can transform societies for the better and inspire care for the vulnerable, Christians should focus on living as followers of Jesus and spreading Christianity to produce a good society and protect the innocent.

Transcript

We're going to be having a Bible study here in our home church in just a few minutes. We're going through the Sermon on the Mount. We're going to talk about what it means to be salt and light.

The noise you hear in the background is our guests grabbing coffee and things like that as we gather around this table to study. Alright, if everyone gets back here in the room. Father, we pray for your guidance in our study of your word, for your illumination by your spirit, and for our hearts to be prepared to gain the insight and the conviction that you desire to be gotten from these teachings of Jesus.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Now we're in Matthew chapter 5. We've been taking our time going through the Sermon on the Mount, which of course is Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Three chapters.

We're going to be looking at now verses 13 through 16, but probably only talking about verse 13. Jesus said, You may have noticed that during our prayer time, both Jude prepping for what we're going to be looking at here. Salt and light.

Now I'm thinking we probably will only talk about salt today. Not because there's so much to say about salt, but because there's so much to say about light. There's plenty to say about salt, but the Bible doesn't have very many references to salt in it.

When Jesus said, You're the salt of the earth, it's hard to know exactly which way in

which salt is spoken of elsewhere in Scripture it is meant. For example, we think of salt primarily in our modern times as a seasoning. And it was not unknown for that purpose in the Bible either.

In biblical times, they use salt for seasoning. It was probably not the most important use of salt, but it was one that was appreciated. This is even mentioned in the book of Job.

In Job 6, 6, he says, and you might not have known the Bible says this, Can flavorless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg? That's right. It's in the Bible. There's implying there's no flavor in the white of an egg, unless, of course, you salt it.

And you do know how big a difference it makes to eat an egg with salt or egg without salt. Or many things without salt are very bland. Some things have plenty of flavor without seasoning, but there's a great number of things that are very insipid or bland.

But when you add salt, it changes everything. It changes the entire experience, the entire flavor of it. And so, as Jesus says to his disciples, You're the salt of the earth, many have felt that Jesus was having at least an allusion to this idea that the world is an insipid place.

It's a dull place. It's a meaningless place without the kingdom of God, which is his disciples. His disciples, his kingdom in the world, give meaning, give purpose, give direction.

Now, without such meaning and purpose and direction, of course, people seek such. They may not seek it in God, unfortunately, but they seek something. People cannot live without purpose.

In our own day, I believe, because our society has largely drifted away from any dependency on God, conscious dependency on God, people no longer have the purpose that has animated Western civilization for all the centuries that Christianity was a dominant worldview. Christianity gives purpose. If you have a biblical worldview, there's a purpose in being born, there's a purpose in living, there's a purpose in dying.

There's a purpose in leaving your work to another generation after you. You take away the biblical worldview, there's no particular reason really to be here. You're here as more or less an accident.

You live your life trying to find some way to probably have a net positive effect on people around you and do more good than bad, and then you come to the end of your life and say, what was it all about? And you'll notice that people who don't have a biblical worldview, people who are not Christians or who are at least not still influenced by a biblical worldview, to a large extent are not really excited about leaving anything to another generation. There's very few people in Western civilization even producing

enough children to replace the population of the nations they live in. In Europe, most of the nations of Europe who've given up on Christianity long before America has are in fact losing population.

That's why they have to import population from, frankly, mostly from Muslim lands because their demographics are not being maintained. Their national people are simply not having enough babies to replace themselves. Why? I think once you've left having God and his purposes in the center of your thinking, there's not much to be excited about leaving things to another generation.

Now, people still have babies, you know, often by accident or they have them on purpose because, well, sometimes for the same reason people have pets or they're playthings. I mean, babies are cute, babies are fun, and I'm sure many people will have babies for reasons other than having a Christian worldview. But you see in general that at times when the Western civilization embraced Christianity as a worldview, perhaps not as a personal faith in many cases, but as a general worldview for the whole civilization, there was plenty of baby-making going on, but that's because people had a sense, there's a purpose for this world, and I need to, once I leave, have launched some extension of myself further into it.

In biblical times, in the Old Testament, for someone to die childless was like the ultimate tragedy. They knew very little about, or maybe nothing about, immortality, personal immortality, but they did know that it's desirable once they're gone to have left seed, to have another generation to carry on whatever it is that's being carried on. But they did believe there was something to carry on.

I think we live in a time now where as soon as God is removed from people's thoughts, it's not really clear what to carry on anyway. You know, children are more or less a liability in many cases. They're certainly a financial burden, an emotional burden if they get sick or if they die prematurely or if they rebel against you.

I mean, people say, what's the point? What's the point of even having kids? Well, maybe there isn't much of a point in having kids if there's no purpose, overall purpose in life, and nothing but God gives that overall purpose in life. We've been hearing a lot about how people are making fun of Ms. Cortez about saying that in 12 years the world's going to come to an end if we don't stop climate change. Well, I don't think anybody in the world believes her.

I'm not sure she believes it. But the point is, I would say, and so? What if it was true? What if the world was going to come to an end in 12 years or 1,200 years or any time? Would it make any difference? Is there any difference in the world coming to an end 12 years from now or 1,200 years from now? There's going to be somebody, whenever the world ends, there's going to be somebody sitting at a table somewhere talking about, you know, I think the world's going to end, and they'll be right. I don't think the world's

going to end any time real soon, but I just say, what would it matter? If there's no purpose in life, what's it matter? I think most people would say, well, I'd like to live a little longer.

I'd like to see my grandkids. But why? Just for some personal enjoyment? That's going to end when you die? You're going to die. We're all going to die, and then the question is, why were you here? What is the purpose for existence? Now, Jesus is telling his disciples, you have purpose for your existence.

You actually have a thing to do in the world. And many times Christianity is preached as if it's not really about what you do in this world. It's where you go when you leave this world.

That it's only about getting your ticket before it's too late. Getting on the train that's on the way to heaven, and that way, you know, then you can sit down, find a comfortable seat, and nap until you reach there, you know? Many churches do not implant in people's minds any sense of worldly vocation for the church, or a worldly purpose for being here. And, of course, the church is going on now for about 2,000 years.

And we might ask, why? Why didn't God just take us all to heaven? In fact, why doesn't he, the moment we're baptized and confess Christ, why didn't he just zap us to heaven? Then no one would backslide, at least. You know? He wouldn't lose any that way. There's obviously a reason for being here.

Part of that reason is, well, let me just point something out to you. When Jesus was praying for the disciples just before he died, he was looking, you know, forward at their future. In John 17, obviously.

John 17 and verse 15, when Jesus is praying for the church, he says, I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. So, you probably have heard the Christian cliché, we are not of this world.

We're in the world, but not of the world. That little statement is not found anywhere in scripture, but it's based on these two verses we just read. Jesus prayed, don't take them out of the world.

In other words, he wants us to be in the world, not out of it. And he says, but they are not of the world. So, we exist in the world, but we don't belong to the world in the sense that people who are not Christians belong to the world.

But why leave us in the world? This is the question. When Jesus prays for them, he says, I don't want you to take them out of the world. And I think many Christians say, well, why not? Isn't that why we got saved, is to get out of the world? Aren't we just counting seconds till the rapture comes? Isn't that what it's all about, is to hang in there till the

rapture? And the sooner it happens, the better? Well, better for you, maybe.

If it was all about you, then maybe that'd be a good argument. You know, if you don't like trials, and you don't like growing old, and you don't like, you know, worrying about the future, yeah, for Jesus to rapture us out of here right now would be just great for you. Wouldn't be great for the world, though.

You see, the world, Jesus prayed that we would not be taken out of the world for two reasons. One, the world needs us. And secondly, because we need it.

How do we need it? We need the trials. We need the conflict and so forth. It's like iron sharpening iron.

It's like a fire refining gold. That's what the Bible says. You know, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than gold that perishes, Peter said in 1 Peter 1, 7. Though it's tried with fire, it should be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

We need refinement. We might think we're ready to go to heaven as soon as we get saved, but God knows better. You ain't ready.

You're not compatible with that place yet. It takes some growing. It takes some modifying.

It takes some shaping of the pot on the potter's wheel. It takes some refining in the refining pot. So staying in the world, frankly, it's necessary.

We need it. We don't feel like we need it because we don't know how much we need to change. But we need it.

But more than that, what Jesus is pointing out here is it needs us. But for what? It doesn't even appreciate us. Jesus said the world hates you.

If you were of the world, the world would love you, but you're not of the world, so the world hates you. Okay, so what do we care if they need us or not? Once again, we have to know what is God's purpose anyway? Why is there a world? Why are there people in the world? Why is there a church, a body of Christ? Why are there disciples in the world rather than disciples that he raptures away to take us to a safe and happy place as soon as we get saved? Because God has a purpose that many Christians don't give much thought to, and that is that he intends, the Bible says, that the time will come when the glory of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. That actual statement is used in one place.

I think that's in Isaiah 11, if I'm not mistaken. But there's another place in Habakkuk that says that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the

sea, that people will know the glory of the Lord, that God will be glorified universally in the world. Someday, Paul said, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

There's a lot of people right now who are not on that trajectory. There are a lot of people right now whose lives are not going the direction of turning to God, acknowledging Jesus. There's a lot of people aimless, in a rotten society, and in the dark, which has to do with the next thing, you're the light of the world.

Basically, the world needs light. The world needs salt. Now, again, if we're thinking of salt only as a seasoning, then we might say, well, nobody really needs salt.

It just kind of enhances the eating experience to have some salt. But salt also has absolutely necessary functions. In fact, there's a statement in the Talmud, in the tractate that's called the tractate of Soferim, which is the tractate of the scribes, it's called in Hebrew.

It says, the world cannot survive without salt. Now, why would that be? We hardly see that as the case. We buy a little canister of salt, and it lasts years because we just put little bits of it on food.

And sometimes we even try to avoid that if the doctor says it's not good for our blood pressure. What do we need salt for? Well, they needed salt for a number of things. In fact, it was so valuable that sometimes the Roman soldiers were paid their salaries in salt.

In fact, the word salary comes from the same root as saline. Salary comes from the idea of salt being paid. Because it was valuable.

Not as valuable as gold, but absolutely necessary. Why? Well, think about it. It keeps things from rotting, especially meat.

Now, if you slaughter a cow, you and your family are going to eat some of that cow. The rest of it, what's going to happen to that? Well, you'll put it in the freezer. But that wasn't an option in ancient times.

In fact, I think, if I recall, not even in the 19th century did they have refrigeration yet. Maybe they did, but I think it came up in the early 20th century. I don't know the history there, but I know it's much more recent than we would imagine.

But for most of human history, by far most of human history, there was no refrigeration. You could not preserve meat. If you killed a deer, if you killed a goat, and you couldn't eat it all that night, throw it to the dogs.

You've wasted 99% of the animal. Unless, of course, you could preserve it. If you rub salt

into it, if you pack it in salt, salt is a disinfectant.

Or at least has that effect on the microbes. Of course, they didn't know about microbes back then, but on those things that cause rot. Now, this would probably be the first idea the disciples would think of when they think of salt.

We don't think of that idea at all in our society. We have refrigeration so we don't worry about salting food unless you're going to make beef jerky for a camping trip. You know, that's pretty salty stuff because the meat will rot without salt if it's unrefrigerated.

We think of it only as a seasoning. They thought of it that way too, but they thought of it more as a necessity for not wasting the vast majority of the food that they slaughtered and lived on. The world couldn't live without salt.

They used it for disinfecting of wounds also. It wasn't the only thing they used. Remember in the Prodigal Son story, not the Prodigal Son, excuse me, the Good Samaritan story, the Good Samaritan put oil and wine in a man's wounds.

That was one way to treat them. Another would be to rub salt in them, a little less enjoyable to do probably. For one thing, it stings.

You ever seen those old movies about, you know, British sailing vessels, maybe Mutiny on the Bounty or something like that, where they'd flog disobedient sailors and tie them to a mast or something and then flog them until their backs laid open. Then they'd take a bucket of salt water and throw it on their back to keep it from getting infected. Salt prevents infection in some cases, but it didn't feel good, by the way.

Throwing that salt water on the back did not make it immediately feel good. In fact, it would sting like crazy. Now, it's these features of salt, I think, that the ancient world would think of mostly.

If you put it on a wound, it'll help. If you put it in your meat, the meat won't rot so fast. It can retard decay.

And I think most commentators would feel, though there are different opinions about this, that when Jesus said, you're the salt of the earth, he's making a statement about the earth as much as he is about the salt, about the disciples, I should say, that the earth is rotten or tends toward rottenness. There's a tendency for corruption to increase if it's unchecked. And you see it in the history of the world.

You see Adam and Eve, of course, they sin, but that's just one sin. But then before long, we see that the next generation, Cain kills Abel. A few generations later, another man kills a guy, and that's, of course, one of Cain's descendants.

Eventually, you've got the world becoming so violent that God has to destroy it with a

flood, and he saves only eight people. But after that, after the flood's over, you've got eight people who are more or less aware of God. But as time goes by, not very long after, you get the Tower of Babel, which is an act of rebellion against God.

Again, God has to scatter people, and then they make idols for themselves. It's just like without something supernatural checking the retardation, excuse me, the corruption, retarding the corruption, I should say, the world becomes simply more and more evil. And so this presents to us a mission that the church has to have an impact on the world.

And of course, we know that the principal thing that we have an impact for, and I don't think any Christian would have any doubts about this, is to bring people to Christ, if possible. Bring people to Christ, make disciples of them. This is the best way to change the world, because you've changed people, and you've changed them, and you've brought them out of darkness into the kingdom of God.

And the net effect of the church's impact in evangelization and conversion and discipling of the lost is definitely the very best thing that the church has ever done for the world. And we can see this, of course, in Western civilization, if we go back far enough, because Europe and certainly America and all the lands that have been evangelized centuries ago were all very pagan, just like the Asian countries were and the African countries were. I mean, all nations were very pagan until missionaries got there.

And of course, Christianity took hold in the West in a way that it never quite did in many other places, probably due to the conversion of one of the emperors. You know, that gave the church a good start and some exemption from persecution in the West. In the East, the Church of the East was horribly persecuted for centuries, and frankly, the Far East never became very Christian.

Christianity took hold and is held, but it's also been driven back. In the Middle East, I don't know if you're aware of it, but the Arab nations used to be very strongly Christian in the centuries shortly after the apostles. Antioch, for example, is the capital of Syria.

It was where one of the major churches, eventually the Gentiles, was. And Thomas went to India and had a huge revival there. Lots of Christians.

There's still Thomas Christians in India today. In the Far East, in the Middle East, Christianity was a huge influence in the early centuries after Christ. Of course, Islam came and supplanted it to a certain extent, which means that a positive influence from Christianity can be undone.

Evil can re-encroach, and Jesus is warning about that. He says, you know, you're supposed to be salt here, but if the salt loses its savor, it doesn't have any impact. It's actually worthless.

It's good for nothing. If your salt is no longer having its quality of salt, you toss it out in

the road and people just walk on it. Now, you might say, but salt, you know, sodium chloride, it can't lose its saltiness.

Sodium chloride is salty by nature. It can't lose that quality without ceasing to exist. But of course, they didn't have pure salt as we do.

At least it was harder to get pure salt in ancient times than now. A lot of salt was mixed with other minerals. As they would dry it out from ocean water or whatever, there'd be sand and dirt and stuff with it, or they'd dig it out of a salt quarry, and there'd be a lot of that mixture.

You'd have salt, but you'd also have some other dirt and stuff in it too, and you'd just live with it. For the joy of having the salt, you deal with the crud. But the thing is, if you had all your salt and crud stored somewhere where it got wet, what would normally happen is the salt would leach out and the crud would be left behind.

The dirt and stuff like that, the salt would kind of dissolve and leach out. Then you go to your salt barrel, get out some salt. There's no salt in it anymore, just crud.

And you say, this is just dirt. So you just toss it out on the street for it to be walked on. Now, the dirt and salt together was what they were calling their salt.

They used it as salt. But you could lose the salt element from it under certain circumstances. It was not unknown.

Actually, Pliny the Elder, who lived before the time of Christ, in his writings actually mentioned that. He mentioned this about the salt that was gotten from the Dead Sea. He said that it can quickly lose its saltiness for that reason.

So, I mean, these are things unknown to us. We have pure salt probably put together in factories, you know, and you can't lose its saltiness. So, again, Jesus is speaking to a cultural situation very different than what we know.

They needed salt. That salt could lose its qualities. And then the salt they need is not there.

And if you don't have the salt you need, you just toss out the worthless crud that was your salt, you know, your salt bin, and your meat rots, unless you can find some more salt somewhere. The saltiness of the salt is what Jesus is, you know, emphasizing here. You are salt.

Now, make sure you don't lose your saltiness. If you do, evil can re-encroach, decay. If you rub dirt into the meat thinking there's salt in it, but there's no saltiness in it, your meat's going to rot just as fast and be dirty to boot.

You know, you're going to need salt that stays salty. Now, the reason salt is of value in

the purpose of keeping meat from becoming putrid is because salt is not meat. It's got its own qualities.

Salt has its own chemical qualities, its own unique qualities that other things don't have. Certainly meat doesn't have it. You add the salt and it's the difference.

It's the unique genius of the salt that makes it useful to the meat. If the salt doesn't have that, those unique qualities, it does no benefit to the meat. It rots.

Now, the point here, of course, is that Jesus implies and warns that the church has unique qualities. There's a unique genius to the community of Christ which they have from God, from being taught by Christ and by being inhabited by the Spirit of Christ. But that saltiness, that uniqueness, can be lost.

This is one of the things that I... It's kind of at the foundation of my series of lectures called *Toward a Radically Christian Counterculture*. I don't know if you've heard those lectures or not. It's a fairly long series at my website.

Toward a Radically Christian Counterculture. I begin by talking about this problem because a lot of people, when they think of the culture war and they think, you know, we'd like to get the culture the way it used to be, they're not really thinking of something radically Christian. Most people are thinking of the way it was when TV was clean.

People didn't use cuss words on TV. Families were intact. There weren't broken families on TV that were the norm.

There weren't people getting pregnant out of wedlock on TV. They didn't show homosexual relationships on TV. The TV which reflected the culture of the time, especially in the 50s, early 60s, it was a more sanitized American culture than what we have now.

And people say, when they think of a culture war, they're thinking of, could we get back to the *Leave it to Beaver* times? You know? But *Leave it to Beaver* was a secular show. There's no mention of God in it. They weren't living for the glory of God, that family.

When the father instructed his children, he never said, you know, what do you think Jesus would do? You know? It's like this was, it was already not Christian. America became what it is now because already, when you and I were born or young, to a large extent, the deceitfulness of riches and the cares of this world had choked out the good seed. And by the way, Western civilization has had its ups and downs in that respect.

It could go back up again. Right now, of course, where we're sitting, it looks rather hopeless, but it's never hopeless. I mean, you never know what God's going to do.

In my study of revivals throughout history, many times the historians who talk about

them at the very beginning, they say, you know, before this rival came, society was at a really low ebb. You know, people were not attending church. They were, you know, drunkards.

They were adulterers. There was, you know, cursing, commonplace. They try to describe a really morally degraded society.

And then suddenly this revival comes. Maybe a guy like Finney, maybe a guy like Wesley, or some lesser known guy, Jeremiah Lampierre, started a huge revival, I think it was in 1858, or thereabouts in the southern or the eastern seaboard. Millions of people were converted.

But I mean, sometimes when society's at its lowest ebb, that's when God says, I'm going to inject some fresh salt here. And then there's a revival. But there are societies that never get that revival.

There have been many societies that have gone down the tubes because the church became weak in whatever ways, certainly not salty. I have to assume, although I was not there, that the large Christian communities in the Middle East ceased to exist and were replaced by Islam, and I don't mean to blame them, but I don't know otherwise, it must be that their salt had somehow lost its savor. Once a region has been thoroughly Christianized, the most natural thing in the world is for people to take Christianity for granted.

To assume that everybody knows. Everybody knows you don't kill people. Everybody knows you don't kill babies.

You know, everybody knows that. No, not everybody knows that. But Christians know that, and people who live in cultures that are informed by Christianity know that.

The Roman Empire, where Christianity first spread, they didn't know that. They killed babies. Unwanted babies were just killed.

Today, Communist China, they don't kill babies. I mean, every place kills babies now, if we're talking about unborns, and sometimes born babies. Now we think, how could that happen? Well, it's easy to happen.

That's what society is, without Christian influence. Abortion, for example, and the killing of babies, only stopped in Europe because of the spread of Christian influence. Because Christianity has its own unique moral genius that Christ has bequeathed to us, that God has given it.

It's a supernatural quality of combating rot and corruption in human nature and in human society. But once the society has had a tremendous impact from Christianity, and then there's a lot more people going to church than before, and raising their kids in the

church, and so forth. And these kids grow up, and they raise their kids in the church, and they think they're Christians because they were born and raised in the church.

But it's so easy to take for granted. Everybody's a Christian. You know, when I was a kid, this would be in the late 50s, early 60s, in my public school, I literally believed, I remember up until at least the second grade or later, I believed that every adult was a Christian.

I knew that some of the kids, my fellow students weren't Christians, but I thought, well, they'll outgrow that. I mean, anyone who's grown up knows God, knows there's a God, knows about Jesus. And, you know, I wasn't right about that, but I was closer to being right than one would be in assuming that today.

It was often the case that most adults in the society, if they weren't Christians, were still essentially sympathizers in some respects with Christian values. I remember when I went in the ministry in my teens, how the unbelievers generally would stop cussing when I came into the room. They knew I was a minister, you know.

If they cussed by accident, they'd apologize, oh, sorry, you know. Because when Christianity is what Christianity is supposed to be, it has that kind of moral control, not control at the point of a bayonet, not control even with acts of parliament or acts of Congress. Christians are not supposed to take over the government and try to make, you know, and civilize the pagans that way.

But Christians, when they are true, holy, living, uncompromising Christians, and when the community of Christians is largely that way, not just an individual here or there, but when there's a community of believers who are like Christ, they exercise moral control more than they intend. You know, there have always been some Christians who say, we need to vote in Christians and outlaw, you know, these sinful practices in the society, and we'll have a more Christian-like society. Well, that's been tried.

That's what happened when Constantine became emperor. It was not the most robust spiritual church that emerged from that policy. What it made people was officially Christian because that's what society kind of required you to be.

If you weren't, you pretended to be because that was what was considered to be decent. You would be considered a bad person if you didn't. So there was this pressure to be better, although many times these people didn't get saved.

Now, this is not what's truly desirable, although it is good, even if people don't get saved, for them to stop being so wicked. For example, if a person's thinking about getting an abortion and they don't get saved, but they get convicted about keeping their baby, well, you've saved a life that way. You know, I mean, maybe the mother doesn't necessarily go to heaven if she didn't become a Christian, but at least some good has

been done.

Someone's been saved. I mean, there are good things that Christianity influences to happen, even short of converting everybody. We don't have any guarantee of converting everybody, but the moral influence of the church has an impact on the society that should be beneficial.

Now, I have to say that it's somewhat ambiguous exactly how much this influence is supposed to be exercised through political means. In my younger years, I just was aloof from politics. I just figured, you know, just preach the gospel, make disciples.

If enough people get saved, you know, society will get better because there'll be better people. There'll be people living for Jesus. Fewer people will be fornicating.

Fewer people will be divorcing. Fewer people will be using drugs. Fewer people will be aborting babies.

Just get these people saved. And, you know, knowing that this is the primary mission of the church is to convert people, disciple people, and knowing that that in itself, if done properly and efficiently, will improve society. And that's the very best way to do so.

What I didn't figure on is that those who don't get converted, especially as they become more numerous and more hostile toward God and toward righteousness, are going to have a very harmful impact on other people, children, and so forth. And I began to have to rethink, well, okay, what is our obligation here with reference to politics? I'll tell you where I stand at this point, because the Bible doesn't answer this. Okay? The Bible is not written to people who had influence over the government.

The government was an emperor. An emperor and his officials that were appointed by him. You didn't vote him out of office.

You could go protest outside his, you know, his palace if you wanted to, if you wanted to be fed to the lions real quickly. I mean, frankly, the people to whom the Bible was written did not have the access to political influence, and therefore they operated through moral influence, which is good. You know, 300 years later, they had impacted the Roman Empire.

After, you know, several generations of Christians being fed to lions. We live in a time now where there's a different situation, as we all know, and that is that we do have some access to political power, but this causes a dilemma for us. First of all, as Christians, we are not supposed to enforce Christianity through carnal means.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. They're spiritual means. Voting, legislation, policing, these are not particularly spiritual activities.

The world uses them, and I don't think that Christians are supposed to use political influence to force Christianity upon other people through policing or laws or whatever. On the other hand, there is... there is something that is perhaps our obligation. Though we can't say, make laws, and we shouldn't even desire to make laws that require everyone to go to church, for example, or for everyone to pray every day, or for everyone to, you know, send their children to Sunday school, I mean, or to read the Bible.

There should be no laws requiring that, because as soon as you require that, then everybody looks like a Christian and thinks they're a Christian, and half of them or more don't know God, and they end up not where they want to be after they die. You know, this is not... this is not God's way to spread Christianity that way. But short of making laws that require people to be Christians, there certainly is nothing wrong with laws that make people be just.

Justice is another matter. Every government is appointed by God to enforce justice, and what that simply means is to protect the rights of innocent people from criminal aggression of other people. Protecting babies from abortion doctors is simply an act of justice.

Here's an innocent life threatened by someone who wants to kill it. If we saw such a thing on the street, a man trying to kill a child, we would have no doubt what the government ought to do. The police ought to go in there and arrest that person, save the child.

There is, you know, confusion in our modern society about these issues, but there shouldn't be. Christians should know what is just. We should know that, you know, people should not go to jail until there's been at least two or three witnesses to their crime, and their guilt has been established, according to Scripture.

There are unjust policies in our society which cause suffering and loss of life and loss of freedom and loss of property to people who are actually innocent. That's injustice. It's not only Christians that are compared.

Every government is ordained by God to enforce justice, that is, to preserve the rights of innocent people. Now, I would never favor using the ballot or legislation to say, everyone must become Christians. You know, the Seventh-day Adventists actually think that's going to happen in this country.

They think there's going to be some law made by Congress requiring everybody to go to church on Sunday. Did you know that? And they believe that would be bad because, of course, going to church on Sunday is not observing the Sabbath. The Sabbath is Saturday.

Yeah, in their eschatology, when the government of America makes it mandatory to go to church on Sunday, that's the mark of the beast, and going to church on Sunday then will be taking the mark of the beast. Only the Seventh-day Adventists will escape that. I mean, other Seventh-day keepers will escape it, but they won't have the guidance of the prophet, you know, Mrs. White, so they won't be on the right path.

This is the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. But the point is, does anyone here believe that someday the United States government is going to make a law that says everyone has to go to a Christian church on Sunday? I don't think so. The opposite.

I mean, obviously the opposite. Yeah, and more likely they'll burn down the churches and make it illegal to go to church. Or at the very best, if the trend changes and we go back to being a society governed more by Christianity, then there'll be more liberty.

People will never be required to be Christians. But it's right for the government to require people to be honest and just in their dealings with people. That's not just a Christian trait.

That's a human moral requirement. And that's what... Even the Roman government did that well in some instances. Of course, they had injustices when they persecuted righteous Christians.

But as far as law enforcement, the Romans are pretty good at that, for the most part. And pagan lands often are. Because it's not strictly Christian to have a just society.

And yet sometimes society becomes so unjust that no one but the Christians are still around calling for justice. It's interesting that in Isaiah 42, we looked at this when we were talking about one of the earlier Beatitudes. But it's still worthy of reconsideration because we don't hear it preached very often, this passage.

And by the way, the passage is quoted in its entirety in Matthew, chapter 12, and applied to Jesus and His ministry. So Matthew considered this to be a definitive passage about the ministry of Jesus. In Isaiah 42, verses 1-4, you'll remember it once you see it.

God says, Behold My servant, whom I uphold. Again, Matthew tells us that servant is Jesus. My elect one, in whom My soul delights.

I have put My Spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles, or the pagans. He will not cry out, nor raise his voice, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

A bruised reed he will not break. A smoking flax he will not quench. He will bring forth justice for truth.

He will not fail, nor be discouraged, until he has established justice in the earth. And the coastland shall wait for his law. Now, I don't think we hear very often, I don't hear very

much preaching about how one of the effects of Jesus' coming was to bring justice to the earth.

And it says so three times in this passage. Now there is such a thing as the social gospel, which has arisen out of a more liberal kind of Christianity and almost reduces the gospel to that of social justice. And you'll find it among some of the more liberal denominations.

They don't believe people have to be converted and follow Jesus, they just have to become more just. They just have to become less oppressive of minorities and things like that. That Jesus wanted to establish justice in the earth.

Well, Jesus wants to establish justice primarily under his rule, where people come under his rule, they submit to him as Lord, they recognize him as king, they are part of his kingdom, and his kingdom is characterized by justice and by other virtues. But, we find that even where not everyone comes under his lordship, where there's a robust Christian witness, justice, at a higher level, is manifested in the laws of a nation. And that is desirable for everybody.

Sin is a reproach to every people, but righteousness, or justice, exalts a nation. Not just Israel. All nations are exalted by just policies, and sin is a reproach to all nations.

And therefore, we have to ask ourselves, okay, does God want America, for example, where we happen to live, to have just laws? Yes, he wants all nations to have just laws. One difference, though, between us living in this country and the Christians to whom the Bible is written is they could only pray for it. They couldn't do anything about it.

Obviously, we can speak up for justice in ways that they cannot. Or they could, but they got fed to the lions. Well, but they did it anyway.

Because they understood their mission. You might remember, I've told this story before, about how the gladiatorial games ended. Do you remember this story? Gladiatorial games continued for centuries after the coming of Christ as a Roman sport, as a Roman form of entertainment.

Thousands of people go to the Colosseum to watch men kill each other. These gladiators were usually slaves, or men captured in battle elsewhere and brought to fight these contests until one hacked the other and went to death. Frankly, it was a contest that many people really enjoyed watching for some reason.

Christians didn't, but that's how little of justice and righteousness a society would have. Even in Rome, which prided itself as being a firm enforcer of just laws and so forth, still killing innocent slaves or having them kill each other for entertainment, that's how far they were from the spirit of Christ. Well, these games continued until a man named Telemachus, who was a Christian hermit who lived out in the desert, came into town once during one of these games.

And he went into the Colosseum and he saw these gladiators fighting it out, and he jumped over the rail into the Colosseum where the gladiators were, and he put himself between them and commanded them in the name of Jesus to stop killing each other. Well, they didn't, but they killed him first. He was killed, and then the games continued.

But people in the stands and the public in general were so convicted by this man, you know, speaking up and dying, in the sense that that was the last gladiatorial game the Roman Empire tolerated. It's what I've heard. The story's in Fox's Book of Martyrs.

And, uh, I mean, this man, here's salt, you know, in a really corrupt society, one Christian speaking up boldly and losing his life for it. It didn't always happen. There were a lot of martyrs who died and didn't turn Rome around, but it was just the tipping point, I guess.

I guess a lot of martyrs' blood has to be shed before the last martyr's blood is shed, and then they stop it. But the point here is that the ending of the gladiatorial games was a significant moral improvement in Roman society. And it was brought about through no influence other than that of a Christian witness.

And, of course, we know in more modern times, slavery in England and then in America came to an end before it was ended anywhere else in the world. And not without Christian influence, but largely due to Christian influence. People like William Wilberforce and other Christians were outspoken and labored hard to end slavery.

Even though Christianity of a certain sort had long been influential in Western civilization, no one had really taken it seriously enough to see apparently the evils, or had been willing to speak up against the evils of Atlantic slavery until these Christians got involved. Of course, you will find, like in America, when slavery was ended, it wasn't just Christians. In fact, there's some question whether Lincoln would have even called himself a Christian.

I've heard that he never actually referred to himself as a Christian, though he respected the Bible and so forth. But there were lots of people, no doubt, in the North, and maybe even in the South, who opposed slavery and probably weren't really Christians. But they weren't without Christian influence.

They were part of Christian civilization. You don't find Muslim civilization or tribal African civilization or Far Eastern civilization in Asia, you don't find these civilizations rising up and putting an end to slavery. It's still practiced in many of these places.

And now it's practiced here again, with human trafficking, sex slavery, and so forth. It's going on. It's going on in America now.

But only after the influence of Christianity began to really trail off again. Once again, if the salt loses its savor, it's not worth anything. And what happens to salt that's not worth anything? Jesus said it gets tread upon by men.

Now, if the Church isn't offering anything of value, there's really no motivation for the world to tolerate it. If we're preaching things but we're not living them, for example, then the preaching is only going to be annoying to the sinners, not impressive. And therefore the Church comes under persecution.

Not because it isn't preaching what it should. Some churches are preaching what they should. The real problem is that the Christian community is not living as it should.

In the early Church in Jerusalem, it says that the people, the Church, which had at that time 3,000 people, it was a new Church, just formed, that they had favor with God and with all the people. This is before persecution broke out against them, but the people were impressed with the Church. Why would that be? Because people's lives were changed.

And not only this person, that person, here and there, a person, but a group of people, a whole society of people, 3,000 people that were eating together, praying together, sitting under the Apostles' teaching and no doubt obeying it, and praying together to the things that they did together. They were a visible alternative society within Jerusalem that were following another king, one Jesus. And the following of that king was visibly creating a superior society, at least in the Church.

And therefore it says the Lord added daily to the Church. The Church, people were joining the Church because they could say, this is something better. The Church should be collectively a society that the secular world looks on and says, that's better.

Men will see your good works and give glory to your Father in Heaven, Jesus said, if you let your light shine. The Church's life should be such that corporately we all are following a different way informed by Jesus Christ, so that no matter where a person runs into a Christian, they're running into somebody that there's the same aroma there. The knowledge of God is like an aroma, Paul said.

It's like they should say, this person reminds me of that other person. Oh yeah, they're both Christians. Yeah, this person at my job reminds me a lot of that person who's my neighbor.

Oh yeah, they're both Christians. That must be what they have in common. So that there's a similarity.

There's a uniformity in a way. Not of personality and temperament and things like that, but of spiritual aroma, spiritual flavor. That's a positive flavor.

It's an improvement. Like salt on insipid food. Oh, that tastes a lot better with the salt.

And this is what Christ made the Church to be. This is His kingdom. He's the king.

He's got subjects in this world and they are supposed to be doing what He said, walking in the power of His spirit, exhibiting Christ-likeness, which is saltiness in the world. And although, frankly, you know, salt has a good effect on wounds, but it also stings. And not everyone likes stinging.

I mean, that's what will bring persecution to. I mean, if Christians do not lose their zest, there will be persecution, but there will also be impact. If the Church loses its saltiness, there will be persecution and there will be no impact.

It's the saltiness which is the distinct nature of salt. The unique thing that it has that other things don't have that can make it useful. It's that which makes it worth keeping around.

And so Jesus is saying, you know, don't lose that element. If you lose that, then you won't be worth keeping around. You'll be thrown out in the street and just be trampled by men.

Now, of course, that raises the question, what does it mean, saltiness? What is saltiness? I believe it's just Christ-likeness. I mean, Christ in his life had profound influence on people, but he also drew persecution. He brought healing, but he also brought a sting to the conscience of those who were you know, evil.

And therefore, what he had, and that was his spirit, it was his way of life. It was his convictions expressed and lived. That made him the lightning rod that he was, but also the power plant that he was.

And so, the church is supposed to be him, supposed to be his body or his flesh and his bones. What made him so unique and powerful in his influence was the spirit of God and the spirit of Christ which is now in us. Supposedly, we're supposed to be walking in the spirit of Christ.

And one thing at the very least this means is we've got to take our mission here seriously. I mean, Jesus is making that as plain as he can. If you lose this uniqueness, you will be of no value and there's no one, perhaps even God, that will care about keeping you around.

Just like the church of Laodicea. Jesus said, you're lukewarm. You're insipid.

I'm going to vomit you out of my mouth. Or he said to the church of Ephesus, you've left your first love. Your first love is your saltiness.

Love is the distinctive of the Christian church. Jesus said, this is my commandment. By this, all men will know you're my disciples if you have love for another.

So, you've left your first love. So, you're going to be, I'm going to take away your

lampstand. And that church isn't there.

It's been gone for centuries now. The city itself is gone. Perhaps the city would still be there if the church was because the church has a way of preserving a society.

But that's all Muslim world now in Turkey where those churches were. These churches were flickering lamps and lukewarm in some cases. And when that happens to a church, well, it's not worth keeping around according to God's valuation.

Why should I keep this group around? I mean, they name the name of Jesus, but they don't live the life of Jesus. They're just taking the name of the Lord in vain by calling themselves Christians. And so, Jesus is definitely urging us to not take lightly our role and our mission in the world.

And what does it mean to love? It doesn't just mean that we are smiley face, affectionate, warm, nice people. It means that we live our entire lives in such a way that is sacrificial and beneficial to others. And that has to do with the way we are in our relationships, the way we handle our finances, the way we steward what God's given us, and in our case, even, you know, whatever political influence we have.

I don't think Christians are supposed to make Christianity prevail through politics, but we have a stewardship that many nations have never granted to their citizens. We have an opportunity. An opportunity translates into responsibility.

I think that we should, in order that Christ may establish justice in the earth, speak up for justice. Speak up for righteousness. We can't make people worship God, and we shouldn't even try to make people worship God.

That's their business. But whether they're just or not is not their business. Every society is required to be just.

And one way that we have a stewardship that early Christians had no opportunity to influence politically their government. We do. Some people have said, how could you, as a Christian, not be disgusted about Donald Trump being the president? Now, Donald Trump was not my first choice.

I did not... He was like 16 people I would have put ahead of him in the Republican primaries. He was probably my last choice. But the question is a strange one.

If we were trying to enforce Christianity on the world and vote in a Christian leader to do that, well, certainly Trump's the wrong guy for that. He wasn't a Christian, at least as near as we could tell. And yet, if what we're looking for is justice, all we want the government to do is maintain justice.

That's what God ordained it to do. We're not looking for any favors from the government.

We're not looking for them to promote Christianity.

We're not looking for them to give favors to the church or anything. We just want the government to protect everybody's rights. That's justice.

That's what every government should do. And to put people in power who look like that's what they're planning to do, as opposed to put people in power who you know are determined not to do that. It becomes a hard thing.

You can sometimes have to hold your nose and vote, but you know you don't want to use the opportunity you have to influence the government for the next generation by putting people in power that you know are going to do what's unjust, especially when injustice is already rampant in the government, and putting someone in who plans to keep the same injustices going. I'm not saying anything for Trump's spirituality. I'm just saying that when it comes to choosing leaders, we don't choose leaders because they're Christians.

In fact, I almost dread putting a Christian in government because government corrupts people. I hate to put that burden on a Christian. If God gives us a Christian leader, that's fine, but that's not what politics is for, and that's not what the church is for.

The church isn't for spreading itself through politics. The church is for witnessing on behalf of Christ and using our influence for the good of people, because we're supposed to love not only our brother, but also our enemies. Paul said, as you have opportunity, this is Galatians 6.10, as you have opportunity to do good to all men, especially those in the household of faith, of course we want mostly to promote the household of faith, but what about all those men who are not part of the household? Well, we want to do good to them too.

Loving your brother and even loving your enemy means you do what's good for them. Jesus said, do good to those who persecute you. How do you do good to someone? How do we do good for our children, our grandchildren? Well, everyone has to decide that for himself, but it seems to me when we think about politics, for example, if we can cast a vote that's going to give my children, my grandchildren, or promises to give them the same liberties that my parents and their parents gave me, wouldn't I do to others as I would want done to me? You know, I mean, I would like to do that.

I'd like for my children to have a just society to live in. It won't make Christians of them, but it'll make it possible for Christianity to be talked about openly. There'll be freedom of speech, for them to live their lives for God if they choose it.

And so the salt of the earth has more than just the effect of spreading Christianity, which is the main goal. You know, our main goal is to spread Christianity, make Christians out of people. But as a secondary goal, we want to do good to people.

We want society to be good for people. We don't want it to be producing more people who are unable to support themselves. You know, people who abuse their children.

We don't want to produce a society where children are being abused. Maybe we can't convert the parents, but maybe we can get justice involved here enough so that these innocents are protected somewhat. I mean, that is God's concern.

And it is even one of the important stated goals of Christ's coming. So, we're not going to make a perfect world. I don't think Jesus is ever implying that.

Even salted meat doesn't become perfect meat if it's not already perfect. And in fact, it still probably eventually decays and corrupts, but it just slows it down. But certainly the more we can bring people to Christ and then bring a conscience for righteousness and justice by our example as a community, as the way we relate to each other, the better.

And again, I would say that and I'm going to close with this, I would strongly recommend for people who are wondering how this might play out in practical social life and so forth, that my series toward a radically Christian counterculture takes virtually almost every area of life and applies biblical Christian teaching to how it is lived and how it would be lived if Christians lived as the first century church was taught to live and did live under the apostles teaching. So, that would be sort of the homework assignment. That would be the extension of what I'm sharing here.

Now, I didn't get into the light of the world, as I said, partly because frankly, there's so much in the Bible about being light of the world. We're going to take another session for that in itself. But both of these statements, salt and light, of course are related to each other.

One is that the church is there to retard the decay of society. The other is that to enlighten the darkened minds of society and the darkened conscience. Both of these are going to have a similar effect.

It's going to be good for society. And again, I don't share the liberal idea of the social gospel, that the whole purpose of Christianity is just to make people behave better, you know, and eliminate all injustice. But as a secondary goal, it's a worthy one, you know.

It's a worthy one. So, anyway, we'll talk about the light aspects next time. Anyone have thoughts, Carter? Yeah, the second portion of that, it says, it's good for nothing but to be cast out and be trodden under the foot of men.

It seems to me I've heard a sermon on it that there was an actual purpose. It wasn't as though it was throwing it out, but when they did, there was a purpose where they threw it out and what it did. Maybe it was just for the killing of things that made a path and it destroyed the vegetation and such.

I don't know. But do you have any inklings that way? I've heard nothing specific about that. I mean, I'm sure that if it was granular dirt, it would be the kind of thing that would, it's like sand or something, you know, you might want the walking paths to have a higher sand amount for rainy days and things like that than rather than muddy.

I'm not really sure. I mean, there could be something to that. Much like coffee grounds and gardening and stuff like that.

Yeah. I haven't really heard much about that. Mike? Off the subject a tad bit, when in 42, Isaiah says, my elect one.

Is that kind of, can we, is that really the idea of Christ being like the whole idea of predestination? Yeah. Christ is the elect one, Isaiah 42 says. And we are, is this what Paul tries to get across? We are him.

We are his body. You know? And we are all one in Christ. That means, what one are we? We're him.

We're his body. We're his flesh and his bones. So, Jesus continues to walk on the earth on our feet.

You know, the opening verses, the opening verses of Acts chapter 1, Luke says, in my first treatise, O Theophilus, I recorded everything that Jesus began to do and teach until he was taken up. Not everything he did do and teach, but everything he began to do and teach. Because that, his lifetime until he was taken up was just the beginning of what Jesus, that's the beginning of Jesus doing and teaching.

When he poured his spirit on the church, he recruited all of us to be part of his organism. He's still doing and teaching through his hands and his feet here, which is us. This is a mystical idea that Paul introduced that the other apostles didn't talk much about, but it's the idea of the body of Christ.

I mean, Paul, remember, he talks about how there's one Abrahamic seed to whom the promise was made in Galatians 3.16, that's Christ. But he says, you know, 12 verses later or whatever it is, he says, and if you are his, then you are Abraham's seed. Well, wait, there's only one.

You said he didn't say seeds as of many, but one seed, which is Christ, but we're all that one seed. We are Abraham's seed because Christ is and we're in Christ. So we are elect, Christ is the elect one, we are elect in him.

And the elect one is going to bring justice to the Gentiles, but Jesus didn't go to any Gentile countries, not when he was here. The church does. That's Jesus traveling to the Gentile country, through the church, bringing about justice to the Gentiles.

And a great deal of justice has been brought to many societies because of the influence. I mean, even tribal groups. I've told that story before about, and it comes from Reader's Digest, but it's an actual case.

After World War II, these American troops came to liberate Okinawa, and as they were driving through, I mean, Okinawa was just totally a mess. I mean, there's no, none of the fields were tilled, all the people were just morally bankrupt, societies were broken down in every village they went to, until they entered this village called Shimabuku, which was the only village they found where all the fields were tilled, society was orderly, there was no prostitution, there was no divorce, there was really virtually no criminal activity in the whole village. And they said, what's up with this? Why is this place so different? And they were told the story that like 30 years earlier, two missionaries had come through there on their way to Japan and had converted two men who were now very old men.

In fact, the old men were the ones telling the soldiers the story. And the missionary only stayed long enough to make two converts leave them with a Bible and say, read this and live by it. And then the missionaries left.

No other Christian influence had ever been in that city. But those two men taught the Bible to their village and it revolutionized their whole society. Now, I mean, there's a stark example of how you know, the word of God applied, changes society for the better.

But we see it every day because we live in America. And we have no idea, because everyone we know has been born in America for the last many generations, but we have no idea what kind of society we would be encountering here if Christianity had never come to the West or to this country. I mean, how debauched the pagan world was.

You know, we take for granted the influence of the word of God in our society. And we just think, like I said, everyone thinks this way. Everyone knows it's wrong to kill babies.

No, not so much. During times of revival, I think the salt causes people to be really thirsty. That's another thing.

It's a good person. And the people around them and they might not know what it is, but it makes them hungry or thirsty. That's another good thing.

You know, if you eat salted peanuts, you get thirsty. You know, salt does... Yeah, or chips. So what Ron's saying is that, you know, when there's a strong salty element to the body of Christ, people get hungry for God.

Thirsty. You don't see it very often, but you do during revival time. You know, when things are really stirring.

They're outside really what they're attracted to. There's a place in the Bible that says that people stood away from the Christians, but yet they were still being added to the

number. Yeah, no man would join himself to them.

Yeah, but God still added to the church. Yeah. This is after when Ananias and Sapphira dropped dead.

It says after that no one dared to join themselves to the church. Christ still added people to the church. And you're right, Ron, in times of revival, because I mean, I happened to be fortunate to live during a revival, the Jesus movement, and it was an amazing thing because not only were people being radically saved, but people who weren't within it, if you talked to them about the Lord, they were interested.

It's like you could talk to almost anyone about Jesus, and they'd have a conversation with you. They might argue with you, but they were interested in the subject. Nowadays, people don't even want to talk about it, think about it, or anything like that.

They're not seeing anything in the church, apparently, at this point. That makes them think it's worth even thinking about. You know? You're right.

I looked at two commentaries. One said that the Talmud said that they would throw the salt on the paths and the temple steps to keep people from slipping. Okay, so, yeah, so they don't slip.

And also, the paths were the only place to throw it, because it was a little bit like gravel, and you didn't want to throw it into the garden or the fields because it would hurt growth. So that was the only place to put it, was on the path. That's good.

Robert? I had a personal revelation that might apply when you're talking about justice, and how it's contrasted here. I lived in Ecuador for a year, and I studied Spanish, and I lived with a host family, so I was really versed in the culture. And I remember some of the friends who were Ecuadorians that I met, we'd walk along the street, and they'd be very careful about crossing the street, and tell me, even at the crosswalks and stuff like that, and I said, well, because here a pedestrian gets hit and people flee.

They go away from it because oftentimes the police will come, and if you're the witness, they'll accuse you sometimes of being involved. And I got hit by a car once in Washington, D.C. I went to school there, and I remember it was in DuPont Circle, it was rush hour. I had to walk through this area of D.C., Connecticut Avenue at rush hour, and I got hit by a car.

Thankfully I wasn't badly hurt. The guy was going when he shouldn't have gone on the crosswalk. He was making a turn and he hit me.

In five minutes, rush hour D.C. traffic was all ground to a halt. I had the police were there, the fire were there, the ambulance came, people were coming off the sidewalk saying, I'm a doc. Another guy handed me his business card and said, I'm a lawyer.

I saw everything. So there's just this justice. Like I said, people know about justice in the U.S. in your contrast to a place like Ecuador.

And compassion. Yeah, yeah. And I mean, Ecuador may have had, South America may have had some Christian influence.

Mostly Catholic, but even the way South America was founded to become Europeanized was through a desire. They said the Spanish wanted to get the gold, wanted to rape the country pretty much with all its resources. Where the U.S. was founded by people wanting to escape.

Religious freedom. And you can see a stark difference there. I mean, they won't even cross the street for fear that even though you have the right of way, you gotta make sure everything's, there's busy roads down there.

And I just thought, what a contrast. Here I got hit by a car in five minutes. The whole world stopped for me in the middle of the street.

Some years ago I heard a story from someone in Wyoming who had been in India. And he said there was a case where in some Indian province there had been a train wreck. And bodies were thrown all over the place.

Wounded people were laying all around the ground. And a crowd would gather, but they just watch. They just look at it.

And they're just curious. And some people heard to be whispering saying, when the missionaries get here, they'll take care of these people. You know? And it's like when Mother Teresa came to Calcutta, you know? There were lepers in the street, starving babies, everything.

No one wanted to do anything for them. And the reason is because their worldview is not Christian. Hinduism says these people are having these sufferings because their karma is bad.

This is supposed to happen to them. You know? If you interrupt the karmic cycle, they'll just have to be reincarnated and go through this again. Just let the karma play out.

And so, I mean, it's a totally different worldview. Mother Teresa comes in with a Christian worldview and she says, hey, I'm gonna wash these lepers. I'm gonna adopt these children.

I'm gonna take care of these people. And now, by the way, I understand if you've been to India and Calcutta, largely because of Mother Teresa's influence, even the Hindus now have, you know, systems of care for these kind of people. It's like, it took a Christian to give them even the idea, you know? And now they're, I mean, these Hindus are not

necessarily following Jesus, but they kind of got influenced with the idea of compassion and righteousness and so forth.

And so, I mean, story after story can be multiplied. And Robert's own experience there is a good personal... We kind of know that must have been a serious head wound. But it was healed.

I wonder, could he be? Alright, is that it? Alright. Alright.