

## Reimagining Church

### Part 2: What is the Church FOR?

Matthew 5:13-16 - [watch online](#)

**Summary:** Unfortunately, the Church is often only known for what it's against. But if we reimagine church we can make it a beacon of light and love it FOR our neighbors... as it was originally designed to be.

#### **Main Points:**

1. God is for much more than he is against.
2. The Church has become known for what it's against.
3. It's almost impossible to believe that God is for you when his church is against you.
4. The Church is God's gift for the world he loves.
5. The Church exists to make people's lives better
6. The Church's role is to illuminate and radiate God's love.
7. People know God is for them when God's people are for them.
8. It's time for the Church to be known for what it is for... People.
9. We are FOR Salem because God is FOR Salem.

#### **Invitation:** Be FOR Salem

- Read Matthew 5:13-16
- Pray for and act on opportunities to be FOR others
- Participate in For Salem Events and Opportunities

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. On a scale of 1-10 how easy is it to generally believe God is FOR you?
  - What tends to move that number up and down?
  - Do you agree God is for us even if we aren't for him?
2. What role do you think church people play in shaping perceptions of God? How accurate do you think those perceptions are?
3. Reread Matthew 5:13-16. Why do you think some people within the Church tend to focus on being against certain things rather than for others?
4. How can the Crosscreek community, or any church, actively demonstrate that it is FOR their neighbors both individually and together?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

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#### **Transcript:**

**IN:** If there's a God, how do you think he/she/they feels about you?

Maybe love you, but maybe that's b/c he kinda has to... like a teacher, but does he actually like you, care about you, is he for you?

Usually think not... b/c if there is a God... he seems to be against the things we like to do or who we want to be...

And who told us that?

- Usually church people

But we've got it all wrong. God loves us, likes us, and is for us even if we aren't for him.

And the Church was originally created to be a living example of this truth.

So what's gone wrong? How can we rediscover the role the Church was created for... well it requires us to reimagine church...

So let's talk about it together.

**WE:** When we read what Jesus actually said and did we find that ... God is FOR much more than he is against.

But for some reason most of us assume it's the other way around...

- Anything I like to do he's against...
- Anyone who doesn't fit a certain mold/image, he's against...

Where does that come from?

Often it comes from people who assume being against anything that is "unholy/irreligious/secular" will somehow get them on God's good side.

- So they "Stand up for Xian values"... fight/argue/coerce through any means possible
- Ends justify the means b/c the ends is stopping what God is against.

And most of the time it's either a veiled hypocrisy (they are doing the same things they say God is against) or they are simply fighting for their own prejudices and disguising it as fighting for God.

- Often Xians are jerks b/c they use God to justify their own prejudices and hang-ups.

And as a result...Jeff Henderson: The Church has become known for what it's against.

- Democrats
- Abortion
- LGBTQ+
- Science
- Alcohol
- Equal rights for everyone
- Other religions
- Fun

And the message that is sent is if you are FOR any of these things... then the Church is against you and in extension God is against you.

It's almost impossible to believe that God is FOR you when his church is against you.

But reality is, LISTEN, God is for everyone... **John 3:16**

- If someone will die for you they are undeniably for you... who did Jesus die for? The World.

And as we saw last time, The Church was created to be a guide on the road back to our Heavenly Father.

To shine a light on the goodness, kindness, love of God.

Why doing series... newcomers' class.

- New, Newer, Review

B/c... might be hard for some to believe but... The Church is God's gift FOR the world he loves.

I'll let Jesus explain it in his most famous teaching...

**GOD: (Matthew 5:13-16)** Apostle Matthew compiled Jesus' main teachings and we have them in what has come to be called the Sermon on the Mt...explaining the KoG and what it looks like.

Jesus has just explained who makes up the KoG... poor, mourning, humble, merciful, etc...

And then he says, "You, my followers, the people I just described, this is what you are..."

**V. 13** Salt of the earth... So weird. What does that even mean?

Lot's of interpretations... One use for salt... preserves food from decay.

Another- Salt adds flavor. Makes food better... more enjoyable

Food w/o salt? Tasteless, bland, uninteresting, boring!

So when Jesus told his followers they were the salt of the earth he's saying...

As my follower, you add flavor to the world... you bring out the good... make the world and people's lives better!

The Church exists to make people's lives better

Jesus offers a rich, full, abundant, satisfying life...

And the Church is the guide to finding the source of that life... Jesus himself.

Not to bring judgment and a list of rules...

But to show that God loves you, is for you, and that you can have true/full life through Him.

Not always easier... but you can find Freedom/Relationship/Hope/Full rich life...

- Being fully known and fully loved by God himself.
- Better at life

## So why aren't people rushing to join the Church?

- B/c when they encounter church people what they often find is flavorless salt... which doesn't actually exist.

What can look like salt but isn't salty?... sand.

What good is sand?

Pointless: Doesn't do anything... kids can play in it. Build some castles that won't last.

Annoying: Who wants sand in their food?... even harmful.

Ignorable: Plays no role in our lives. Isn't good for anything except to walk on and then brush off.

Instead of adding the salty flavor/satisfaction of Jesus to the world the Church has become known for being sandy...

- Pointless/Annoying/Ignorable

Instead of making life better it either is completely ignored or makes life worse.

But if you've ever met a salty JF or church?... What did you experience... Jesus- love, joy, peace, acceptance, even fun.

Jesus gives another analogy... **V. 14-15** Light? Light- allows you to see reality for what it is.

Reality- You were created in the image of God. To have a relationship with God. He loves you. He is for you.

Sin broke. Jesus came to fix it. Offers to restore us for free.

Without light people get lost, stumble, fall, separated, miss the beauty of everything around them.

- Driving at night not realizing how beautiful Oregon was.

In the same way... **The Church's role is to illuminate and radiate God's love.**

Light doesn't keep to itself... it doesn't just light up its little spot...

It reaches into every corner. It keeps going...

The Church should be as easy to ignore and as helpful as high beams on a dark road.

So how do we shine that light? **V. 16**

Do good works?

- Read the bible, pray, go to church, sing some songs, listen politely?
- Nothing wrong with but how is that doing anyone else any good?

To shine is to be FOR others.

- Love with actions and words
- Serve, share, support, encourage. Make their life better.

And the result of being FOR others?

It illuminates and shows clearly who God really is... **People know God is for them when God's people are for them.**

**CROSSCREEK:** And that's why at Crosscreek we are FOR Salem... Jeff Henderson.

For too long the Church has been known for what it is against.

- Trying to win some culture war
- Trying to impose a strict set of rules and values on a society that wants nothing to do with the hypocrisy, prejudice, and judgment that comes with it.

For too long the church has been seen as an exclusive religious club that is only concerned about the insider and their own holy huddle...

- Concerned only about what happens within its four walls for an hour or two on a Sunday.
- And not their neighbors who might never enter those walls

We want to change that.

**Not-JF:** if you've felt like God is not for you b/c a Xian or a church has not been for you...

I apologize. That wasn't Jesus... that was a flavorless and lightless "Church."

That is not the Ekklesia/Community of JF's

It was pointless sand... it was a quickly fading glow-in-the-dark sticker.

God is for you. The Church was created for you. We are for you.

The community of Crosscreek is for you... this whole thing was created for.

Keep coming and asking and investigating... and let us prove to you God is for you by allowing us to be for you.

God is for way more than he is against and he is for you

At CCC, we have decided we are going to be known for what we are for... the same thing Jesus is for... our neighbors.

- All of them

**It's time for the Church to be known for what it is for... People.**

See FOR SALEM isn't a nice slogan we have. It's not a gimmicky catch-phrase... it's who we are. It's why we exist.

To Invite our neighbors to D/E/S... together... b/c God is FOR them.

**YOU:** So how do we actually be FOR SALEM? Individually and together.

**Be FOR Salem...**

**Read Matthew 5:13-16**

**Pray for and act on opportunities to be FOR others**

- When your goal is to be FOR others, opportunities start showing up everywhere.

How can you (individually) be FOR your neighbor and FOR Salem?

- Eat/drink with them... Not as a project. Actually be for them.
- Stop focusing on what divides you and focus on what unites you
- Serve... God sends the rain on the just and unjust alike
- Can probably think of some of your own in your own context/life

These are awesome things... and even 30 people living individually like this in a city like ours would make a difference for a lot of people... but

One grain of salt by itself... might add a bit of flavor... but what's better? A bunch of salt crystals enhancing and flavoring a feast.

One little candle can help keep you from tripping and stubbing your toe... but what about 50 LED flashlights pointing in the same direction?

We can make a huge difference when we are FOR our neighbors... together.

Together:

- **Participate in For Salem Events and Opportunities**

Even why we have offered SWAG... not to advertise our church but to let people know there is a community that is FOR them.

- "Oh It's my church. Often the church is known for what it's against. We want to be known for what we are for and we are for Salem b/c God is for Salem."

**WE:** What if we were so salty and shiny that people who weren't even for our church/Jesus knew that we were FOR them.

When they heard YOU are part of the Crosscreek Community they knew they could expect you to be someone who truly cares about THEM.

What if our individual neighbors were afraid we might move b/c of how much we were for them

What if people who would never step foot in a church gathering were terrified Crosscreek would somehow close down b/c of how much we are FOR them... b/c of how much their lives have improved b/c we are for them?

What if this city actually knew God is for them b/c our community of Crosscreek is for them?

Not so people think we are great but so they can see how much God loves them, cares about them, and is FOR them.

Lives would be transformed, this city would never be the same.

We are FOR Salem b/c God is FOR Salem. And together we can make an eternal impact.