

## Jesus' House Rules – Lesson 2

### “Salt, Light, and a Better Righteousness: Kingdom Influence & Kingdom Integrity”

#### Summary

*Kingdom people are called to live as a public witness, showing that Jesus transforms righteousness from outward rule-keeping into inner devotion. As salt, we preserve goodness in a decaying culture; as light, we bring clarity and hope into dark places. Kingdom character leads to kingdom influence, and our lives point people to the King.*

#### Scripture

Matthew 5:13–20

### 1. Introduction

#### Opening Thought

Last week we explored how Jesus forms kingdom character from the inside out. This week, Jesus shows what that character does in the world. Kingdom identity leads to kingdom influence. We don't follow Jesus privately—we become His public witnesses.

#### Key Words Defined

- **Influence:** The visible impact of a godly life on the world around it, the outward effect of an inward devotion to God. Biblically, influence is not about power, platform, or personality—it is about presence, character, and faithfulness.
- **Integrity:** Living with an undivided heart—consistent, honest, and faithful before God and people. It is righteousness on the inside that expresses itself on the outside.
- **Righteousness:** The right relationship with God that produces right living before God. It is God's standard of what is good, just, and true—reflected in a life aligned with His will.

#### Jesus as an Example of Kingdom Influence and Kingdom Integrity (Matthew 4:1–11)

- **He chooses obedience over appetite**, submitting to God's Word and modeling how to resist temptation with truth.
- **He trusts the Father without demanding signs**, demonstrating quiet faith that rejects performance-driven spirituality.
- **He refuses shortcuts to power**, valuing worship of God above success and showing a better way than worldly ambition.
- **He anchors every response in Scripture**, revealing a heart shaped by God's truth and showing believers how to stand firm.
- **He remains faithful under pressure**, holding steady in temptation and setting the pattern for how God's people endure trials.

## 2. Characteristics of Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13–16)

### Salt and Light: Identity Before Activity

- Jesus doesn't say, "Try to be salt" or "Try to be light."
- He says, "'You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.'"
- Kingdom influence flows from kingdom identity.

	Salt	Light
<b>Focus</b>	Preserving and Flavoring a Decaying World	Visibility, Clarity, and Hope in Darkness
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserves meat from decay</li> <li>• Enhances flavor</li> <li>• Symbolizes covenant faithfulness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reveals what is hidden</li> <li>• Guides</li> <li>• Gives hope</li> </ul>
<b>Jesus said</b>	You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.	You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Kingdom people slow moral decay, preserve goodness, and bring the flavor of Christ into every environment.	Kingdom people are meant to be seen—not for their glory, but for God's.
<b>Practical application</b>	<p><i>Preserving goodness:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing up for integrity at work</li> <li>• Protecting someone's reputation</li> <li>• Refusing to participate in gossip</li> </ul> <p><i>Adding flavor:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing joy, kindness, or encouragement into tense spaces</li> <li>• Modeling patience in stressful environments</li> </ul> <p><i>Slowing moral decay:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a voice of truth when others compromise</li> <li>• Living with integrity when no one is watching</li> </ul>	<p><i>Visibility:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living openly as a follower of Jesus</li> <li>• Letting your faith shape your decisions</li> </ul> <p><i>Clarity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking truth with grace</li> <li>• Offering wisdom when others are confused</li> </ul> <p><i>Hope:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging someone who feels stuck</li> <li>• Bringing peace into anxious environments</li> </ul>

### 3. Jesus Fulfills the Law (Matthew 5:17–20)

#### Righteousness Explained

- Jesus is not abolishing the Law—He is completing, embodying, and revealing its true intent.
  - The Pharisees focused on external compliance.
  - Jesus calls for internal devotion.
  - True righteousness flows from the heart.
- This is why Jesus says: “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees...”
- He is not calling for more rules—He is calling for deeper transformation.

#### Practical Application

- Examine motives before actions
- Practice honesty even when costly
- Choose obedience over image
- Let Scripture shape your desires, not just your behavior

### 4. Discussion Questions

- What does it mean to be “salt” in your current environment—home, work, school, community?
- Where do you see darkness around you that needs the light of Christ?
- How does Jesus’ teaching about fulfilling the Law challenge your understanding of righteousness?
- What is one practical way you can bring clarity, hope, or integrity into a specific situation this week?
- Where is God calling you to be salt or light right now?

### 5. Closing Thoughts

Kingdom character leads to kingdom influence. Jesus doesn’t call us to hide our faith or blend into the world—He calls us to stand out with humility, integrity, and love. When we live as salt and light, we don’t point people to ourselves—we point them to the King. Your life is meant to make Jesus visible.

#### Challenge for the Week

Identify one area in your life where God is calling you to be salt or light this week. Write it down and pray for courage and clarity.