

As far back as I can remember, on this journey for 16 years with Jesus, I got saved 16 years ago, my mom would say I never outgrew the “why” stage. I’ve just always been like the kids that get into that “but why?...but why?...but why?....” I’ve just kind of never outgrown that. And so, when I started to try to follow the Lord, I had the “why” thing all the time. And so, what happened to me is I just kind of hopped around a bunch of different sects of Christianity. So I got into college, and I wanted to know if there was any truth or any power in the Charismatic movement so I just started going to Charismatic churches and Charismatic revivals. I just wanted to know what was going on in there. I found some things to be false, and I found some things to be very beautifully true. And I started going to Bible churches and checking out that thing. And then Baptist, and I even sat in on some Church of Christ things. I just kind of danced around with the sects. What I noticed was that all of the different kind of branches, they all preach the same thing with a different emphasis. Like, here’s what they would say. “Do you want more peace? Do you want more life?” And this is the message that would go out to Christians, not just non-Christians. “Do you want more peace? Do you want more freedom from your sin? Do you want to walk in more life and vitality? Do you want a deeper, more passionate relationship with Christ? Then you need to _____.” And depending on where you were, the blank was different. At the Charismatic churches, it was “You need a deeper walk with the Holy Spirit.” In the Bible churches, it was “You need more Scripture. If you get truth and you master truth, then you’ll have it.” And then there were other places that were like, “No, no no, you need discipleship and you need this planned out discipleship model or module. And if you do that, then you’ll be there.” And then you had others that were like, “No, no, no, it’s missions. You’re never going to know the heart of God if you don’t know missions, because missions is the heart of God.” And there were other groups that are like, “No, no, no, it’s deep, deep, authentic, real community. And if you have that, then you’re going to be there.” And others were like, “No, no, it’s community renewal, cultural renewal. If you get into that, then you’re there.” And others are like, “No, no, it’s worship. God desires a worshiper. We need to seen for an hour and seventy-five minutes, there needs to be fireworks and tears. And that’s what it is. If we could get into that mode of worship, then we’ll be there.” And others yet were like, “No, it’s systematic theology and understanding systematic theology. And the more systematic and programmatic we can make this thing, the better off we’ll be.” And on and on and on and on it goes.

Now, I don’t want to in any way discredit any of those things. Because I believe that all of them are viable and all of them, to some extent, are commanded in Scripture. I think what’s happened though is that churches, we’re guilty also, we’ve concentrated on like one or two of those. In a pursuit of excellence, in the pursuit of doing things perfectly, we’ve concentrated on one or two to the neglect of others, and in the end, it’s made us very unhealthy. Imagine it this way. Imagine you went to the gym and you only worked the right side of your body. Now, I’m being careful here and I’m not saying that if you only worked the upper part of your body, because that’s most men. So instead of that, let’s say that we just worked the right side of our body, we just did curls, we did triceps, we just worked those abs and we worked the right leg and the right calf and we got on the creatine and started drinking the protein shakes and eating the protein bar and eating every two hours and doing all those things that we read about. Now, what you might be thinking is, “Well at least the right side of you would be very powerful. At least that. You’re going to look a little weird, but at least the right side of you is powerful.” Now the problem with that is that the body wasn’t designed that way, so here’s what’s going to happen. As you grow and stretch the ligaments and tendons, the muscles begin to grow on the right side of your body, it’s going to push one of your hips forward, pull one of your hips back, push one of your shoulders forward and the other one back, and you’re going to get all twisted and all maligned.

And in the end, you're going to be strong nowhere because you're going to throw your back out or blow out one of your hips, and you're just going to be a mess. And then you're not going to be strong anywhere or be able to do really anything because you're disjointed and out of how you were designed to function. And so what happens when the church says, "Let's be good at these two things," is, in the end, she ceases to function as God designed her to function in culture and in society. And so you get this sickly, maligned version of what should be strong and beautiful.

So here's what I want to do the next few weeks with you. I want to go backwards. I want to start with who Jesus says we are as the church, and then I want back into all these things that are right and good that everyone says you need to do to know Jesus deeply. So let's start with a very, very popular passage of Scripture. Matthew 5, we'll pick it up in verse 13. "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. 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." Let me point out a couple of things before we talk about what I think we need to talk about. I'll tell you this: sitting in this crowd, listening to Jesus are peasants and uneducated men and women. And the reason I'm telling you women is that, in the 1st century, most Jewish men began in the synagogue with a daily prayer that says, "Praise You, God creator of heaven and earth, that I was not born a gentile or a woman." But Jesus here is speaking to gentiles and Jews and uneducated peasants and educated Pharisees. He's talking to this massive cross section of society, and He's saying, "You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world." So what Patterson and Bleeker worked with you on a couple of weeks ago seems to be true that there's not a type of person that God is after, but rather the door seems to be wide open for all who would believe and repent. The other thing I would notice is it doesn't seem to be the plan of God to get us into monasteries "You are the salt of the earth, so get in the cupboard." That's now what happens. "You are the light of the world, so hide it under a bush....oh no." I just wanted to point those two things out. Those are universal truths that I'm always trying to get across here.

So let's pick it up at verse 13 again. "You are the salt of the earth,..." Now, when this thing has been preached historically, and it's been preached correctly historically I believe, what's happened is we've taken salt and what salt does, and we say, "Since salt does this, that means we are this." And so, it's kind of worked like this. We've said, "Salt is a preservative. So then, we are as the church a preservative against moral decay in society...Salt brings flavor, so we as the church flavor society...Salt is a fertilizer, so we as the church create ground where spiritual growth can occur...When you eat salt, you become thirsty, so we as the church, when people are around us, when people see us, they become thirsty for the things of God." And some guys stretch it really bad. Like I read one guy that said, "Salt is white, and white is the universal symbol of purity, so we are pure." I was like, "That's kind of stretching, man." It's like, "Salt is a granule, so we are..." I think you can probably take it too far, but I think that they're right and they're on to something and they're good. But what I want to do is talk core issue of salt and not just salt as a preservative, salt as a flavor. I think we'll address that some, but what I want to talk to you about is kind of core scheme underneath all of that. Here's what I would tell you, here's what salt is. Salt is breathing spiritually. That's what it is. Let me explain what I mean by that. The Holy Spirit grabs a hold of our heart and begins to chisel and shape and mold us more and more and more, over a period of time, into the image of Christ. So we're not talking about integrity or character but rather the root or the well that integrity and character come out of. And so the Holy Spirit begins to work on that thing in us, our soul, our spirit, transforms in us, moves in us, chisels at us, creates in us, so that we become the type of people that preserve against moral decay, add flavor to life, cause other people to be spiritually thirsty...we could go on and on in all the other illustrations of what salt does. And that transformation of the Holy Spirit working in us and us submitting to it then enables us to become light to the world around us. Notice that this text starts by saying, "You are the salt of the earth," and that becoming the salt of the earth

leads to then being the light of the world. So what ends up happening to make us salty, if you will, is a submission to the Holy Spirit's power in our lives to shape and mold us that leads to transformation that then is attractive to the world around us.

I've spent a lot of years now, probably ten, trying to figure out whether or not we know our own message. I know we know pieces of it. I know we know that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and those who believe in Him get to go to heaven. I know we know pieces of it, but I'm wondering if on a whole, we understand the gospel and we understand the kingdom of God. Because there seems to be an undue, unhealthy passion for information and knowledge and little to no passion or zeal for transformation. So in the end, we've got belief down, but we haven't been changed at all. In fact, it seems like there is a mountain of sermons and resources and programs that are meant to increase our knowledge, but there's no accountability or structure of authority that enables us to apply the information that we've gained. So in the end, we've become masters of information but not necessarily masters of life. And so what's occurred on a whole is we can confess and cry out the things that we believe, but few of us operate in those things at all. And listen, you can not empirically disagree with me. We don't do any better when it comes to marriage. We don't do any better when it comes to debt. We don't do any better when it comes to getting sucked into consumerism. We don't do any better when it comes to lust, pornography, any of those things. Those things are as pervasive an issue within the walls of the church as they are outside of the church, despite the fact that on a whole churches across the country would agree belief wise on all of those things.

Now, why is this such a big deal? Well let's go to the text. You're looking at me like you don't like what I'm saying, but I'm just reading you the Bible, so let's go. "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." So listen to what the Scriptures just said. To believe but not to practice is worthless. I mean, it's worthless. And I don't know if you know this or not, but we've lost our saltiness. I'll give you an example. I grew up on the West Coast, Bay Area. Some of you are like, "It's all making sense now." And even in San Francisco, when I was in elementary school, here's how we began every morning at school. We all stood up, found the flag. "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God..." Do you guys not remember the pledge? Let me explain to you what was happening there. For the last thousand years the church's role in society was called Christendom. And what this means is that the institutions within our organizations taught Christian virtue. Christendom is dead. It's over. In fact, if it was not for small gatherings of conservative people, we would already mirror Europe or Canada. We're less than a generation today. Why? Because the church has lost her place in culture. The salt has lost its saltiness. Because we believe but we're not different. So what's left except for us to be trampled on by man? Because there's no difference; we have nothing to point to. We can't say, "See, marriage works best when you do this, you submit, you love each other like this, the man loves his wife like Christ loves the church, the woman respects the husband. See, it works." Instead, we're saying, "Divorce is a sin. You shouldn't do that." Yet we have divorces everywhere. We're saying, "Lust will eat up the mind, it will make you look at women, it will make you look at men as objects. Then you'll have soulless sex that brings no real gratification, no real and no real depth." And then our pastors are getting busted all over the place doing the same things. You see, we have belief but we have no transformation, and it gives us the role of fool in culture. Is that not our game? Is that not our role here? Do you guys watch television? When was the last time we were painted in this really great light? Sometimes I'll be watching it and they'll really be dogging somebody. I'll be like, "Matt, turn it." Then I'll be like, "Come on, we've earned that. Let's watch this. Let's just reap it real quick." Because you've got belief with no transformation. We've mastered information and applied very little of it.

So, what I want to do this morning, is I want to think about how we got here. I don't think all is lost, because there definitely have been darker times Christianity's history. The Spanish Inquisition, the Crusades, if you start looking back on some of that stuff, it's dark. But we're in a real dangerous place as a culture and as a country when it comes to our

faith. And I think that by looking at how we got here, we might be able to fight against it and start to swim upstream. Because I think if we were honest, a majority of us would say, "I believe a lot more than I operate in." So what's led to that, what's caused some of that and what are some of the spiritual battles that we need to fight? I've got five things here, and I'll cover them quickly. Number one: I think there's been an undue emphasis placed on width rather than depth. Let me say it this way. I'm not talking about numerics here. I'm not talking about numbers, that there's been an undue emphasis on numbers. What I'm saying is that I think there's been an undue emphasis placed on the amount of information you know versus the amount of emphasis placed on you actually doing what you know. And so, churches are built all across our country to teach you information, but few of them are built out to actually help you do it. And so we think that just by giving you information, you're just going to do it. Instead of just having accountability and authority and those kind of things that would enable to build, we just keep throwing information at you. And it's the equivalent, the mathematical equivalent of expecting someone to do long division when they don't know how to add. Are you not math people? Because that's impossible. So this is what we keep doing. We keep going, "More information... more information...you need more information...you need to figure out this theology...here's the doctrine of the Holy Spirit...here's the doctrine of this...here's the systematic approach to this...here's more of this..." And we're gathering information, gathering information, gathering information, and on one in the church and no level of accountability is actually going, "Are you practicing what you know?" So it derails us. And you'll learn this, especially if you go overseas, specifically closed countries where people maybe have a paragraph out of the Bible that they have to teach out of for two years and yet their faith goes well beyond what we see here most of the time. And they don't have information. They just have good old obedience.

That's one; let me tell you two. I think the second problem has been...and this is not just with Evangelicals or Christians; this is pretty much our whole country. I think there has been an absolute disintegration of genuine, real community. About a year after Christ found me...not that He ever lost me, but He let me know I was lost...about a year in, I felt a little bamboozled because it was a little bit more difficult than they told me. They made it sound like, "Just come down the alter and shake my hand. I'll pray over you, get you wet and it's on." So I was like, "Alright!" and came down and did that thing. And here's what started happening. When they talk about there's actually sin in your life and there are these things that derail your life and takes away from your life, they weren't lying. I mean, that stuff started coming up in me, and it became difficult. And here's the two things I constantly needed and sixteen years in, I still need. I needed encouragement, and I needed rebuking, constantly. Because there were days that I was overwhelmed with my own junk and I felt like it was moving impossibly slow and I felt like I just wasn't getting and I was confused. I'm a "why" guy, so I want to know everything right now, and it's just not happening. And I needed people to be able to encourage me. I needed people to be able to come up and grab me at the right time when I wasn't strong enough to be honest about my own struggling heart, that they could sense it and feel it because they knew me so well. And I also needed men and women who knew me well enough, who I trusted well enough to receive, "Come over here. What are you doing? You know this is sin. You know this is not right before God. What are you doing?" Because confrontation and rebuke are difficult enough when you do have good relationships. I would say everyone always responds, I don't care how godly you are, everybody always initially responds to rebuke in one of two ways: either we hear the rebuke and we're like, "You're right. I'm horrible. I give up." and that's the way we want to go. "I just give up...I can't do this..." Or we respond the other way, which is the polar opposite where, "Oh, I'm glad you noticed the speck in my eye. Um, I was surprised you could see it with that log in your fat head. So why don't I help you get the log out of your gargantuan head, and when we get that out, we can talk about my speck." And that's the way I always handle it. I always have. It doesn't matter. And here's the game we play, and I promise you'll be able to find yourself. What we want to do when we get rebuked with our sin is we want to, even though know that's true maybe, we want to find sin in their lives as to somehow discredit them so we don't have to listen to the fact that the truth is they called us out, whether they have sin in their lives or not. And so, we get called out, and we immediately go, "Let me find their sin, because if I have an enemy to fight, I don't have to think about the enemy in me." That's kind of the game we play. It doesn't work and it destroys us, but it's a game that we play. And

we always handle it that way, but when you have a love and logic to fall back on, great things can happen. Like, when you rebuke somebody and they want to go either way, you can just pull them aside and go, "Listen, have I not proven that I love you? I am genuinely concerned about you. I mean, this is genuine concern. I'm not trying to lord anything over you." So we need that type of community and that type of relationship that we can be encouraged when we're weak and we're not even strong enough to confess that we're weak, but people know us well enough. And then we need the kind of community that can support a good spiritual spanking that we all need often. But the truth is few of us have found that kind of love in church settings. But I don't think that's just the church's fault, which leads me to the next problem.

Not only has there been an undue emphasis put on width over depth and the disintegration of community, but I also think there has been a lack of submission to authority. And what I mean by that is the church has been created by God to be that place where those who are spiritually strong care for, love on, encourage, rebuke the spiritually weak. And what's happened in our consumeristic society is that it's not about growing deep anymore, but it's about us feeling better about ourselves by coming into church. So what we want is somebody who can entertain us and music that we somewhat enjoy, and that's what we want. So what's happening on a massive scale is people aren't joining churches, aren't submitting to any kind of real authority, but instead they're just coming and going to places to be entertained. Now, let me just talk to you. Every time I get a couple of years older, I look back on me three years ago and realize that guy was an idiot. And I keep thinking that there's going to be this day where like I finally get to 40 and I look at me at 37 and I'm like, "That kid was brilliant." But I hasn't happened. I just keep getting older and I keep looking back and I'm like, "What was wrong with me?" Now let me be honest with you. Right now I feel sharp. I feel submitted to the Lord. I feel like I'm loving my wife passionately and romantically and like Christ has commanded me to. I'm engaged in the lives of my children. I'm doing all that I know to do, but I guarantee you in a year or two from now, I'm going to look back to me at 33 and go, "What was wrong with me?" So if that's true, and I think most of us would agree that that has been true in our lives, all of us have destroyed things that we didn't mean to destroy that we can look back on, we didn't know we were destroying it at the time, and we can go, "Oh, that was me." So if that's true, how true is it that we need men and women in our lives to be able to say, "You're jacking this up?" Isn't it true that we need men and women to come along side of us and go, "Hey listen, you're not playing your marriage like the Scriptures say you should. You need to repent. Here's how you need to do that..."

But few of us walk in those kinds of relationships. We kind of come to church over here and then we've got some Christian friends that we hang out with and do fellowship with, which is usually around some kind of board game and guacamole. And although I'm a big fan of guacamole, in the end, that's not what we're after. It doesn't create empathy; it doesn't create passion. So, I think there's been a real lack of submission to authority, and it's breathed into this problem.

I'm going to be really careful on this next one. And by that I mean I'm just going to rant like I always do, but if you get angry at me, I can go, "I didn't even say all I wanted to." But I plan on saying all I want to, so here we go. I think there's been an overemphasis placed on being the light. Let me explain. Because of what's happened at the Village and because of our age...like everybody's worried about how to reach 20 year olds not, because the most unchurched demographic in our country is 20 year old men. Well, it's one of the things we have tons of, so people are like, "What are you guys doing?" We tell them some things, but honestly we don't know. In the end, we really don't know. "So what do you do to draw them?" "I...I make fun of the Xbox a lot and tell them to move out of their mom's house. I mean, I don't know what else...It's just what I say all the time. Get a job. Girls find jobs sexy. That's what say. I say it every week." In the end, because of what's happened here and because of the rapid growth here and the demographic that's grown here, we've had the opportunity, I and several guys on staff had had a lot of opportunities to go speak at a lot of pastor's conferences and things like that. And let me just tell you, the message that's out there for pastors, and it starts before seminary, is that success and all that is completely predicated upon numerics, how big you grow and how fast you get there.

And so, even in the three conferences I've spoken at this year, the predominant message was, "Do this to get people in the door...say this...don't say this" I've literally heard it said that preaching through books of the Bible is lazy. I've also heard that people don't have attention spans beyond 20-25 minutes; if you preach and teach anything beyond that, you're going to lose everybody. I have a rebellious spirit, so I'm like, "I am going to preach through Ezekiel for two years, an hour and forty five minutes at a time. We'll see about that." But this is kind of the message. The message is, "Do this to get people to come...and build this to get people to come...Let's build a \$4 million children's facility that ends up shooting the kid out to the parent down a 45' slide after you get your retina scanned. Let's do that. If you do that, people will come. Let's build a little coffee shop with free Wi-Fi, and then people will come," and you do these things. And what ends up happening is there has been, on a whole, a real sacrifice of the message of the gospel in order to get people in, which in the end, is unbelievably destructive because you have full of people who begin to maybe believe some things that they don't practice. And that's why you've got massive, massive churches built on massive portions of land and no cultural transformation occurring and the church continuing to lose its place in society. I'm not calling out anybody's name; I think you'll know who I'm talking about here, but I'm telling you there's a church in our state, one of the largest in the country, where the pastor has said, "We don't preach about sin, we don't preach about the cross and we don't mention blood." You ain't talking about the gospel then. I don't know what you're doing, honestly. You're at the rotary club. You're using the Bible to be the Kiwanis. You're using the Bible to be a feel good fraternity/sorority...humanism. Without blood, without the cross, without sin, without the agonizing screams of the Son of God as they beat the flesh off His back, you don't have the gospel. The gospel is that He made Him who knew no sin to be sin and then poured out His wrath on Him so that we wouldn't be destroyed. That's the gospel. If you make it clean and sweet and pretty, it's not the gospel anymore. I would also say this. You can't just be salt either. There had better be an emphasis on light, because if all your focus is just salt, then you become the Dead Sea. Input without output, if you inhale without exhaling, then you've got the Dead Sea, you've got dead orthodoxy, you've got truth that makes no difference.

There's one more piece that I think is causing an issue for us. I think that you and I live in a culture built on speed. Even when we know things are going to be slow, we still get frustrated by them. Like, we're on I-35, downtown at 5:15 and we're like, "What in the world?!?" It's like, "What do you mean? It's like this everyday at this time. 4:00-7:00, this is what we've got. This is what it is." Or one of my favorites in this area is how everybody gets frustrated when they go out to dinner on Friday night at 7:00 that there's a 35 minute wait. So you send the one runner in to check the time. You already know. There's people sitting in the grass. There's a tent. Some guy built a fire. You know, but you send the kid in. And he comes right back out, "45 minutes." "Awww!" and then my favorite, "Let's go find some place else." As if anywhere on Friday night at 7:00 isn't going to be slammed. But this is us.

We want speed and we want it now and we want it to work now. And let me be really honest with you. And I'm going to go contrary to a lot of my brothers in arms, but spiritual growth and depth is no superhighway; it's a crawl. It's like your kids. You can stare at your kids all you want, but you're not going to see them grow. You can stare at them all day and just wait for something to pop up or to grow out. You don't feel or watch growth. You can measure it, but you don't get to feel it or are really even aware of it. You're making breakfast one morning, and your son or daughter comes in, hugs you and tells you that they love you. You look down on them and it looks like they grew three inches overnight. But they didn't grow three inches overnight; they've been growing the whole time, but it happened so slowly, you can't see it. You can measure it, but you can't see it. Here's what I mean by that. When you have your first baby, all the breakable stuff is still on the floor. But then they learn to crawl: two feet, you move it up to two feet. Then they learn to cruise: four feet. Then they learn to climb: six feet. Then they learn to climb six feet: spoon to the backside. Isn't that true. It's like, move it up, move it up, move it up, move it up and then finally you're like, "We can't nail it to the ceiling. You do something." And then you paddle, you discipline, you shape, you do those things. Well, spiritual growth is pretty much the same way. Let me throw this out at you. I think if you've got any kind of church background...and if you're not a believer in here, it's evident that I'm talking to Christians. It's a family meeting as I like to say...Have you've ever been in a situation

where you've begun to talk about God and you've begun to answer somebody's questions about God and you've started impressing yourself? And then all of a sudden, you're like, "The Holy Spirit just gave me words." Which I believe, absolutely happened, out of the pool of growth that had been occurring for years. So all of a sudden, you're like, "Well, Matthew 5 says...Ephesians 2 says..." and you're like, "I didn't even know that I knew what Ephesians 2 said." But that was in you, that was what happened, you had this growth. Now, here's what's happened to us. We've heard something and have been convicted of it. So we've walked into church here at the Village or some other place and we've talked about the necessity of community and deep relationships and we've said, "Yes." We've talked about recovering and healing and letting go of bitterness and unforgiveness, and we've said, "Yes." We've talked about breaking the power of addictions in our lives, and we've said, "Yes." And so, we've moved to the places where that should occur, and six weeks later, when it's not all better, we give up and walk away. Like, at our recovery program here at the Village, it's called "Recovery at the Village," when we start going through our step studies, which I would tell everybody in here to go through one of those step studies. It's just discipleship; that's all it is. It's not a drug/alcohol deal; it's a soul deal. And here's what happens. On week one, when you get into the steps, everybody's like, "Yeah." it's packed, everybody's there. Week two, second step, everything's going well. You get to the third step, you start seeing some drifters. By the fourth step, half the room's gone. And that fourth step just happens to be a personal inventory where you walk through all the junk in your heart, not pleasant at all. But then everybody bails, and they're like, "I gave it a shot." It's all I can do not to go, "So, thirty- six years of jacking up your life, and you gave us a month? Thank you." And here's the thing. If you don't like this idea, this idea that it's going to take time and it's going to require perseverance and you're going to have to fight through it and wrestle through it and junk in your heart is going to get revealed that you don't want to deal with, if you don't like that idea, here's the great news. You can find a billion other pastors out there and a thousand other churches to go to that will tell you, "No, no, no. It's just this one thing. If you do this one thing, then it will work." Now here's the problem. That's not going to work, but at least it's a more fun message to listen to. And then on a whole, it just seems that people are like, "Ah, at least the road to destruction moves quickly. At least we're moving instead of being stuck in traffic, just inching forward. At least destruction gets there fast. I'd just rather have that. I'd just rather be moving.

And so we're watching, day by day, year by year, the church lose its position in society. And it's happening because salt has lost its saltiness, because so few of us apply what we say we believe. So without inner transformation, light is bland and unappealing if not obnoxious and dangerous. So where does that leave us? I think you've got to ask yourself a couple of things. I think you need to ask yourself, "Where do I need to be obedient? Where's the Lord leading me right now? Where is He calling me? Where do I need to step out? What has He been asking me to do where I've said no? Where am I not doing the things that I know I need to be doing and I need to begin to do that?" Here's the other question I would ask, especially if you've been here a long time. "What did you give up on too soon? What did you walk away from too quickly?" I think you need to seriously ask yourself those questions. Can I tell you my fear? Honestly, how difficult is it to preach on information not being the key but obedience to information being the key by giving information? I've told you this a thousand times. My great fear is that sometime this week, you're going to be drinking a cup of coffee with someone who's going to tell you, "Oh, I watched on Fox News that they're taking the Ten Commandments out of some city hall somewhere." And you're going to go, "Hmm, the death of Christendom. Yeah. The problem is a salt problem. You've probably heard salt mentioned as a preservative, but let me get into the core issue of that...." That's what I'm afraid of. I'm afraid you're going to do that at Starbucks, instead of going, "Where am I being disobedient and where do I need to become obedient to the things that I know?" And, "What has the Lord asked me to do historically that I was obedient to for a season and then walked away from because it wasn't happening quickly enough?" Instead of wrestling with and being wrestled with to such a place where salt is actually created here.

So, this is salt; next week we get to light. Let's pray, "Father, it's good to be home. I thank You for these men and women, and I thank You just for the opportunity to open up the Scriptures and let You read us. And so, this is my hope. My hope is that You would read us. My hope is that You would reveal to us where we've been disobedient, and where we have not

walked in what we know, and where we haven't submitted to you, but we say we believe but don't practice and haven't spent our time or energy on being obedient to what we know, but rather just kind of gathering more data. And so, I pray for Your help. I pray for Your help and that we would wrestle with ourselves and that You would speak clearly and that we would begin to take those steps of obedience wherever they come from. And I just continue to lay space and the Albertson's at Your feet, saying that we want to be salt and light. And if that's a part of it, then stir Your people's hearts up. So help us. I always want to pray that the words spoken this morning would haunt us and not quickly nor easily leave our minds. I pray against the five things that we talked about this morning. I don't think they're philosophical things; I think they're spiritual powers that are going to need to be overcome. So that's going to take You laying on men and women's heart to pray about deep biblical community happening here, that we would be okay being shaped and molded over a long period of time, that we would desire depth over width. These are things that we're going to have to pray through and fight through and fast over. And I pray that You would give us the resolve to pursue You at such a level. We love You, and it's for Your beautiful name I pray. Amen."

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