

Weekly Study Guide

The Week of September 15, 2013

Daily Readings

Monday	Matthew 5:13-20	Tuesday	John 8:12	Wednesday	Isaiah 42:5-7
Thursday	Isaiah 49:5-6	Friday	Isaiah 58:6-8	Saturday	Colossians 4:2-6

My notes on this week's readings...

Next Week in Worship

Next week's message: *The Heart of the Matter*

Next week's readings: Matthew 5:21-37

Every group of people lives by some kind of code. Some have clearly written rules. Some are looser and more flexible. Jesus aims to heal the heart of our relationships and create a Christian community that is transformed by the love of God and filled with love for one another. Join us next week as we learn to see Jesus' vision for life together in heart-level conformity to God's design and not just obedience to rules.



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Group Discussion

Connect	What kind of family did you come from? Can you think of a story that illustrates your background?
Learn	<p>Read Matthew 5:17-20. In this passage Jesus famously says that he came not to “abolish” the law and the prophets but to “fulfill” them. But to “fulfill” doesn’t just mean to “affirm” or “agree with.” It means that Jesus finally brings the Old Testament to fullness. He brings its past story forward to a new future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In this past story, God spoke through a stutterer named Moses; lead through an adulterer named David; and built his people through a conniver named Jacob. Have you ever worried there was anything in your past story that disqualified you from God’s story?• You get to claim Abraham and Sarah as your grandparents, heroes like Esther as your aunt, and prophets like Isaiah as your uncle. How does it change your family story to include these stories? <p>Right before explaining this fulfillment of the law and prophets, Jesus described the kind of community we would be in this story. Read the first half of this description in Matthew 5:13.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Just as salt was used to preserve against rot, Jesus says his followers would preserve against the rot or decay of sin in the world. How could followers of Jesus act as a sort of positive preservative against sin in our world?• Salt has to be distinct from the meat it preserves. But it also has to be intimately connected with it. What challenge does this image present for disciples of Jesus? <p>Salt has its limit against decay, and there’s only so much that we can do against the power of Sin by ourselves. Jesus also says that we should be like a light that points to the source of real, lasting hope. Read Matthew 5:14-16.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jesus tells his disciples that people will see their (our) good deeds and be pointed toward God. Do you find these words challenging? Do you find them hopeful or positive somehow?• Sometimes people do good things to draw attention to themselves. What kind of actions - or what kind of attitude - helps point to hope in God instead of us?
Apply	Is there something about living a new story of salt and light that God is using to speak to you today? What steps of response do you think you need to take?
Pray	Sin is a rotting and decaying power in our lives and our world. Pray for Sin to be pushed back and defeated.