



1. Sunday Summary: This Sunday in our series on *Cultivating Community* we explored the “Why” of Community. The answer to that question has to do with who we are – our identity – as followers of Christ. As we saw, our identity in Christ is very rich. We are loved, holy, gifted, worth it, son or daughter of God, and many other things. But as Jesus points out in our passage, we are also salt and light. These are important bits of who we are.

A) Salt. Salt helps to flavour food. It adds zest. In a similar way we are made salty in order to bring zest – joy – into the lives of those around us. Salt also preserves. As the church of Christ, we are in the world as a preservative, helping to mitigate the worst effects of sin.

B) Light. As light, we reveal the way, and push back the darkness. What salt and light have in common is that both penetrate. Salt needs to penetrate food to be effective. Light only penetrates darkness if we let it shine. The point is that they are “IN” the thing they would affect. That’s the point of being light and being salt in the world for the church, too. It’s the point of community.

As a community we are the living and breathing embodiment of God, and his love. As such, we represent him to our world. Therefore, the way we are, and how we act as a community, directly impacts how people see Jesus, and whether they’ll come to know him. And, we have a say in how salty we are, or how intense our light is. The brighter and more flavourful we are as a community, the better people will come to know the Lord. This is why we concentrate on cultivating community with the practices we’ve been focusing on. It’s not only for us, but for the sake of the world that they may come to see and know the Lord.

2. Connecting Questions: (Interactive, life sharing, thought & feeling type stuff)

- What, in your opinion, are some of the most attractive qualities about a community? What would draw you into a community?
- William Temple once said, “The Church is the only institution that exists primarily for the benefit of those who are not its members.” How do you feel about that? Does it scare you to know that the primary function of the church is not for you, but for those who don’t know Christ? If not, should it?
- Salt and light can differ in intensity. As Cornerstone CRC how salty is our salt, and how focused is our light? Why did you answer the way you did? How could we become a brighter and saltier community? Think about how practicing some of the practices we’ve been talking about might help.
- There’s probably much more to be said about the images that Jesus uses of salt and light, and how they can apply to us as his followers. Think together about some other meanings for those images.
- What insights from today’s message were most helpful for you?

3. Truth Questions: (What does the Bible say?)

- Think together about some other passages that deal with the purpose of community and the church. Can you think of any? Talk about them.
- Read John 17:14-18. What is this passage about? What does it mean that the disciples are “not of the World?” What might this be saying to us as a community? How can we not be “of the World”... and then at the same time be “sent into the world” (vs. 18)?

4. Formation Questions: (Taking it further, How does the Truth change the way I live?)

- What concrete steps can you make to sink the gospel truth that we dealt with today deeper into your life throughout this week? What will you do about the message you heard today?
- Think together about one way that each of you will lean into your role as salt and light this week. How will you be saltier salt, and brighter light?

5. Resources for Further Study:

1. Hirsch, Alan, *The Forgotten Ways*. (Brazos Press, Grand Rapids, MI. 2006.)
2. Guder, Darrell L., editor, *The Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending Church in North America*. (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI. 1998).

