



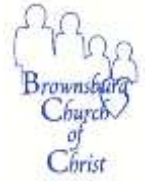
Be Salt and Light: Invest and Invite

Brownsburg Church of Christ

by Edwin Crozier

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PM Assembly



Introduction:

A few weeks ago, we learned from **Matthew 28:19-20** that evangelism/discipling is not something that we need to fit into our lives. Rather, it is something that needs to define our lives. It is not something we set aside time to go do; it is something that we do wherever we have gone. But what will this look like? When we actually become disciplers instead of just doing personal evangelism sometimes, what will we look like? Is there a picture of this in the Bible? Actually there is. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus provided the picture of real discipling in **Matthew 5:13-14**. As God's kingdom citizens, we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. These two pictures really provide what we need to understand to be real disciplers all the time instead of just trying to set aside some time to do personal evangelism. I especially want us to think about this with our upcoming evangelistic push in mind. In two weeks, we are having what we have dubbed a "Friends and Family Day." It is a day we are putting special emphasis for inviting friends and family to be our guests. **Matthew 5:13-16** not only provides us with the proper picture for being disciplers throughout our lives, it also gives us insight regarding how we can prepare for this special day. Jesus says we need to be salt and light. This shows us two practical keys we can employ to disciple. To be salt and light, we must invest and invite. Remember that phrase: be salt and light; invest and invite.

Discussion:

I. The Salt of the Earth: Invest

- A. You may be asking why I have tied the concept of investing to being the salt of the earth. The reason is there are two keys to being good salt. Both of them are a kind of investment for us.
- B. The first key is having strong flavor, or as Bill Hybels says in his book *Contagious Christianity*, high potency.
 1. Jesus Himself said, "...but if the salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?" (**Matthew 5:13**). Our potency or flavor will be directly proportional to how much we invest in Jesus Christ.
 2. Consider **Galatians 5:22-23**. The text there speaks of the fruit of the Spirit. In this passage, Paul isn't telling us what to work on. He is telling us what will bloom in our lives when we are following the Spirit's lead. If we are walking by the Spirit (cf. **Galatians 5:16**), we will start removing the works of the flesh and they will be replaced by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control. As this increases, we will stand out more and more among the worldly who lack these. People will start to notice our potency, flavor. Some will eventually want to know why that is our life and want to have what we have. So, when I say we must invest to be salt, I mean we must invest ourselves in Jesus, in the Spirit, in the will of God.
- C. The second key is connection. Salt never works while it is still in the shaker. Salt can have all the flavor in the world, but if it never contacts the food it doesn't do any good.
 1. This contact is about our investment in other people. We need to invest in relationships. We need to invest in the person. Cold call evangelism is not wrong; it just isn't the most effective way to work. Think about this. When someone calls you out of the blue to sell you aluminum siding, how likely are you to listen? Well, if you spent the day looking at how bad your siding is, you might. But other than that, not so much. However, what if your neighbor who has had you over, brought you food when you were sick, has watched your kids, got a job selling siding and asked if he could share it with you? More likely to listen? What if it was your best friend since high school who was in your wedding? More likely to listen? What if it was your brother, sister, Mom, Dad, son, or daughter? More likely? What is the difference in these scenarios? It is the investment in the relationship.
 2. Look in **John 1:40-41**; who did Andrew go get to tell about Jesus? His brother. There was investment. In **John 1:43-44**, Philip found Nathanael. They were obviously friends. There was investment there. Even in **John 4:7**, when Jesus met the woman at the well, He didn't start with, "I'm the Messiah, you Samaritans need to believe in me." He began by investing in the relationship to the degree that He asked for water. That may seem like small potatoes to us, but to the Samaritan woman it was a huge relationship deposit that a Jewish man would treat her with respect and ask something of her.
 3. Investing in a relationship means more than just having geographical proximity. It means caring. It means demonstrating that the relationship is important. It means showing respect. It means serving. It means letting people know that you care about them and not just adding their name to a church role or their money to the church's contribution. It means letting them know you are praying for them. It means praying with them even

though they've never been to church with you. It means being a shoulder to cry on. It means being a cheerleader to rejoice with. It means letting evangelism and discipling flow from your care for them. It means even if they don't ever attend with us, you will still care for them. Even if they don't ever agree with us, you will still love them. We are so afraid that someone will reject us if we talk to them about Jesus or His church, but first we need to demonstrate to others that we aren't going to reject them if they don't accept our invitation.

- D. If we are going to be disciplers instead of just doing evangelism some of the time, we are going to be the salt of the earth. We are going to invest in our relationship with Jesus and with others.

II. The Light of the World: Invite

- A. In **Matthew 5:14-16**, Jesus says we are not only to be salt, we are to be light. We are to shine our lights so that folks will see our good works and glorify God instead of ourselves. Light is what points the way. Light is what shows the path. Frankly, I don't have any idea how we can get folks to glorify God by our good works apart from somehow telling them that our good works are connected to God. So, when you think about being the light, don't just think about doing good; think about pointing the way. Think about shining the light down the path the person you have invested in needs to walk. Think about inviting them down that path.
- B. In the big picture, I'm not suggesting the way to disciple is wrapped up in inviting people to attend our assemblies (though in connection with our "Friends and Family Day," that is exactly what I want you to think about). In the big picture of discipling all the time, there are all kinds of invitations you can offer. Like Jesus in **John 4:10** you can invite someone into a spiritual conversation. You can invite someone to pray with you. You can invite someone to study the Bible with you. You can invite someone to serve with you. You can invite someone to talk about their spiritual needs. You can invite someone to share their fears, anxieties, and doubts and then invite them to discuss the solution with you. You can invite someone to a group or home Bible study. And yes, you can even invite someone to one of our assemblies or classes (especially our upcoming "Friends and Family Day").
- C. Notice the number one danger Jesus highlights for our light—putting it under a basket. The danger is that even though we have the light that can shine the way for people, we can hide it. For most of us, this doesn't mean acting like a heathen sinner (though if that is your problem, let's talk some time). For most of us, this means acting properly but never letting anyone know that our behavior stems from a relationship with Jesus. In other words, we invest, invest, invest—we just don't invite. We let them see the good works in us—we just don't ever tell them that we walk in these good works because of God (cf. **Ephesians 2:10**). We misunderstand passages like **I Peter 3:1**. That passage seems to suggest that someone might obey the gospel without ever having to hear a word of direction from us. That just isn't true. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (**Romans 10:17**). There is no way to short-circuit that. The passage in **I Peter 3:1** is not saying some people will become Christians without actually hearing any direction about how. It is talking about deeply invested relationships in which the unbeliever is won over by the conduct of the believer and will then listen to whatever the believer has to say. The person has been won by the conduct but still has to hear exactly what to do.
- D. We need to invest. But investing is not enough. We have to invite. We have to be salt, but we also have to be light.

III. Making this work for our Friends and Family Day

- A. Obviously, I am preaching this because I want us to think in the big picture of discipling and evangelizing all the time. I want us to consider our lives in general. However, I also want us to think very specifically about the opportunity that is ahead of us on April 24 (just two weeks from today). Here is where the rubber meets the road for us. We have an opportunity to start practicing all that we have learned right now.
- B. So, as you think this week about inviting someone to our "Friends and Family Day," think first about investing. In fact, think about the relationships in which you already have an investment. Andrew and Philip didn't go start investing in someone in **John 1:35-51**. They went to someone they had already invested in. And someone says, "Oh, I'd rather cold call someone. Wouldn't it be easier to knock on door? I'm better at talking to strangers than to my friends and family." I get that. I can knock on doors all day long, but still have family I struggle to talk to. Why? Fear of rejection and losing the relationship. At the heart of it, I fear losing their approval.
- C. This is at the heart of investment. Investment means taking a risk. And just as in the financial world, the bigger the risk, the bigger the fall if it doesn't work. But also the bigger the victory when it does. Think about this. Investing in a CD has very, very little risk. But, the gains are pretty minimal. Investing in a mutual fund has more risk, but not as much as just investing in a particular stock. The mutual fund might lose more than a CD if it bombs, but it will definitely win more when it works. Or you might go whole hog into day-trading. These are big risks and many people completely lose their shirts, but those who win, win big.
- D. Instead of being salt and then light, I often want to be light and then salt. Instead of investing and inviting, what I often want to do is invite and then, if that works out, invest. If I invite them and they reject me, I haven't lost

much investment. But if I invest and then they reject an invitation, that can be painful. Cold-calling and door-knocking are great things to do. You never know, you might just come across someone who has already been considering the aluminum siding you are selling. But the reason that is attractive is because if that perfect stranger rejects us, it is no big deal. We didn't lose anything. Yes, there will be some gains sometimes, but we aren't risking part of ourselves. When we talk to our friends, co-workers, neighbors, and family we are risking something. The question we have to ask is whether or not their soul is worth the risk.

- E. Allow me to share with you something I've been thinking about, because I completely understand this struggle. As a guy who longs for approval and affirmation, I've always had trouble with this. I'm asking myself these questions now and if you struggle with this too it might be good for you to ask. What hole am I trying to fill with their approval? Why do I so desperately need their approval today that I will risk their soul for eternity? How can I fill that hole with my relationship with God and His children so that I can take the risk that will benefit the souls of the people I care for? Finally, I am having to ask myself, am I avoiding the invitation because I really care about them or because I care about me and can't stand the thought of the pain potentially losing the relationship will cause me?
- F. In two weeks, we are having our "Friends and Family Day." It is a great opportunity to invite someone you have invested in. This doesn't have to be a make it or break it deal for you relationship with them. It is just an opportunity to be salt and light in someone's life.

Conclusion:

Discipling/evangelizing must cease to be something we do sometimes. It must be something that governs our lives. We must always be salt and light. Through this, we will lead others to glorify God along with us. No, we won't convert everyone. However, we will be amazed at what God can do as we surrender to Him and let Him change our lives and cause the growth through the opportunities He gives us.