



Sermon Discussion Guide

July 5 & 6, 2025

"How Can the Church Take a Stand to Change the World?"

[Matthew 5:13-16](#)

Faith Meets the Real World is a new sermon series that explores how our faith in Jesus shapes the way we live in everyday situations—at home, at work, in relationships, and in the world around us. Each week, we'll tackle one big question about how to follow Jesus in real, practical ways that bring hope, healing, and light to a broken world.

PRAY & CONNECT

Open in prayer and invite the Holy Spirit into your conversation. Ask God for wisdom and discernment and trust him to guide you. Take time to recap the message or view it on hopeonline.tv. Did you have any ah-ha moments where you felt convicted, compelled, or inspired during the sermon? What's been on your mind this week? Have you been able to apply the message to your everyday life?

GROW

Read [Matthew 5:3-16](#) – *"The Beatitudes" & "Teaching about Salt and Light"*

- What does Jesus mean when he calls people "blessed" who mourn, hunger for justice, and are persecuted?
- How does being called "salt and light" shape your understanding of what it means to be a Christian?
- Where do you notice a temptation to hide your faith instead of letting it shine?
- What does this passage teach about the role of faithful followers in shaping the world around them?

Read [Nehemiah 8:10](#) – *"Joy of the Lord"*

- Why do you think Nehemiah tells the people to celebrate instead of mourn?
- What does it mean that "the joy of the Lord is your strength"?
- How might your understanding of God shift if you believe joy is a holy and powerful force?
- How can joy be a spiritual discipline rather than just an emotion?
- How can you build a culture of joy in your home, small group, or ministry team?

Read [John 2:1-11](#) – *"The Wedding at Cana"*

- What does this story reveal about God's character and his care for seemingly small or ordinary moments?
- Why do you think Jesus chose this moment—a wedding and a hospitality issue—for his first miracle? What does it suggest about the way God values celebration and community?
- How might your view of what is "spiritual" need to expand to include joy, beauty, and abundance?
- When have you seen joy or celebration open someone's heart to the message of Jesus?

Read [Galatians 5:22-23](#) – *"Living by the Spirit's Power"*

- Which of the fruit of the Spirit feels most natural for you, and which feels most difficult?
- Why does Paul call these qualities "fruit" rather than commands or rules?
- How does Spirit-produced character show up in everyday situations like conflict, parenting, or leadership?
- What does it look like to cultivate these traits in a group or community, not just individually?

APPLY

Pick one of the applications below to put into practice this week ...

- **Rediscover everyday joy.** Identify one ordinary area of life—your commute, mealtimes, chores, or errands—where you've grown cynical, weary, or spiritually numb. This week, ask God to help you rediscover joy in that space. Intentionally look for glimpses of his goodness and write down at least one moment of gratitude each day.
- **Be salt and light.** Choose one relationship or environment where you've been hiding your faith or blending in too much. Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to help you reflect God's character there, through love, truth, or joy. Then, act: Say the encouraging word, extend the invitation, serve someone sacrificially, or offer forgiveness, even if it's uncomfortable.
- **Lead with Holy Spirit fruit.** Mentor or encourage someone who needs help growing in one specific fruit of the Spirit. Don't preach, model it. Whether it's patience with a coworker, joy in parenting, or gentleness with a friend, let them see the Spirit's fruit in your life. Then, have a real conversation with them about how the Spirit is changing you, and could do the same for them.