



# A Better Tomorrow

Matthew 5:13-16

## *Desire for Better*

When we listed things that people desire, “a better tomorrow” was mentioned. A better tomorrow is a better future. This could be “a better tomorrow for me (or my family, group or country)” or “a better tomorrow for the world in general.”



## *Questions about a Better Tomorrow*

1. How do people describe “a better tomorrow?” What changes or improvements are needed?
  
2. How do people think we can obtain “a better tomorrow?” What do we need to do?

What does the Bible say?

## *Something Lost*

After God created the earth, living creatures and first humans, He “saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (*Genesis 1:31*). God planted a garden in “Eden” which was home for the first humans, Adam & Eve (*2:8, 18-22*). “Eden” means “delight.” There was harmony in relationships – humans with God, humans with creation, and humans with each other. It was “very good.”

But something went wrong. The first humans chose to disobey God (*Genesis 3*). They rejected God’s authority. The harmony was broken. Sin<sup>1</sup> infected and corrupted humanity. The world became fallen and full of trouble. Humans could still learn and work to improve their conditions, but they could not save themselves from the main problem – a broken relationship with God.<sup>2</sup>

If we accept the biblical “diagnosis” of our troubled world, we can see that realizing “a better tomorrow” is greatly limited because of human sinfulness in a fallen world. We need restoration of what was lost. We need a restored relationship with God. We need His presence and power. We need renewal. We need God to rule our hearts and lives. We need “the kingdom of God.”

## *Kingdom of God*

The Old Testament prophets spoke of a future king & kingdom (*Isaiah 11:1-9; 25:6-8; 65:17-25*). This will be a kingdom of peace, righteousness, safety, wellness and the full knowledge of God. The effects of sin (death, pain, sorrow, etc.) will be removed. This kingdom will bring restoration of the harmony and purpose experienced in Eden, but it will be much better. It will last forever!

<sup>1</sup> ‘Sin’ may be defined as any attitude or action opposed to God’s authority and moral will.

<sup>2</sup> God created humans with the capacity to learn, invent, develop, etc. as needed to improve human conditions. By God’s common grace, this still happens in our fallen world, and God uses both believers and nonbelievers in these advancements. Many things have improved! And we have reason to believe many things will get better in the future. However, human ‘advancements’ can be used for either good or evil, and they cannot save us from our fundamental problem, which is spiritual. Only God can save us. Only God can give us the ‘better tomorrow’ we truly need.

## ***When? What about Tomorrow?***

The full realization of the kingdom of God (the *ultimate* "better tomorrow") is future. However, the kingdom is also *present* because the promised king (Jesus Christ) has already come! Until Jesus comes back to establish the kingdom in its fullness, we can realize the kingdom *in our hearts* as we submit our lives to the King. And this will affect the world today and tomorrow.

## ***The Way of the Kingdom***

In his "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus taught his disciples concerning their responsibilities in the world. This applies to every Christian, including us today. Read Matthew 5:13-16.

3. What are the benefits of salt and light? How do these metaphors apply to Christians in the world?<sup>3</sup>
4. What may hinder (prevent or slow) the positive influence of salt and light? (*Matthew 5:13, 15*) In what ways can Christians lose their "saltiness?"<sup>4</sup>
5. In what ways do Christians conceal (hide) their light? In what ways do they let their light shine?



📖 "...let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds<sup>5</sup> and glorify your Father in heaven." (*Matthew 5:16, NIV*)

6. In what ways does being "salt" and "light" help bring about "a better tomorrow?"
7. Does being "salt" and "light" apply to our academic pursuits, careers and ambitions? If so, how? In what ways should Christians be "salt" and "light" in daily life?

## ***Reflection & Application***

- Do you want a better tomorrow? Do you believe the Bible's teaching about this? Pursue answers to the questions: What is wrong with this world? How can it get better? What is needed? Is Jesus the answer? He is! Do you need to trust in Jesus for *your* tomorrow?
- As a Christian, are you "salty?" Is your light shining? In what ways are you helping to bring about a better tomorrow for the people in your world? Each day, submit your life to Jesus and allow Him to shine in and through your life.

<sup>3</sup> Salt was used as flavoring, preservative, and fertilizer. The Jewish rabbis used salt as an image for wisdom. Christians should stand against moral corruption and decay, and share God's wisdom in this fallen world. Light symbolizes God's revelation, truth, purity and goodness. Jesus is *the Light* (*John 8:12*). He exposes evil and reveals truth. He reveals the way of salvation and the way of life. As Christians, we are 'light' as the light of Jesus shines in and through us.

<sup>4</sup> Strictly speaking, pure salt cannot lose its saltiness. However, in ancient Israel, the salt-containing substance (called 'salt') contained many impurities. Since the salt was more soluble, it could leach out and thus became useless as salt.

<sup>5</sup> 'Shining our light' is not only proclaiming the gospel but also *living it out* as we do 'good deeds' for the benefit of others and the glory of God. These good deeds include actions to improve physical and social conditions in the world.