

Matthew 13 – Personal Arc
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Here are some ideas on Matthew 5:13-16: "You are the light of the world."

#1. The main idea: THE REALIZATION OF THE PERSONAL ARC OR PERSONAL REACH. Illustration: draw a circle, put a stick figure of a man in the center. The drawing represents *the personal arc*. Draw a 3-sided box. The box represents any circumstance or situation.

#2. "The center of gravity" of anything is the place of greatest importance. People often believe that the center of gravity is the situation or circumstance. Jesus reverses this conception. It is the personal arc that becomes the center of gravity. The personal arc is your personal reach. That's what you can do; what you control, what you can do, regardless of the situation.

#3. We act in any circumstance from within this personal arc.

#4. There 5 analogs Jesus uses to make His point. The Lord's point is this: We must never cede or give over any circumstance or situation to darkness! The personal arc is our response to darkness.

The analogs:

(1) "Salt" (v. 13.) The essence of salt in this usage is that of influence. Salt spreads through food. It influences the taste. It's useful, enhances, make things better or richer. It is the active spiritual influence. If salt is tasteless, if believers are inert, indifferent, neutral, passive, unconcerned-- then they are useless. Their only use is as road-filler!

(2) "Light" (v. 14.) The essence of light is function, enabling us to see, to know, to make fundamental distinctions. Light precedes and allows for knowledge. This overrules what are called "values" today. The Church does not function according to cultural "values." Instead, we make fundamental distinctions based on the Word of God.

(3) "City set on a hill" (v. 14.) The essence of "city" is that it is evident/obvious/open/unhidden. My personal arc, like that city, is then a presence in any circumstance. Therefore, we are not allowed to be immersed in culture nor in society. "The city" is evident in its rejection of political correctness. We are not really part of "the village" spoken of by and about the world in general.

(4) "Lamp" (v. 15.) The essence of lighting a lamp is to dispel darkness. In other words, we counter-act human darkness. We cannot do this if we put the lamp under a basket. The idea is to know the light, have the light, but refuse to use it!

(5) "Shine" (v. 16.) The essence of letting light shine is to commit. Let the servants see your light, your "good works" that are intended to bring glory to the Father in Heaven.

There can be danger in open, or uncommitted, relation to Jesus, to Scripture, to Christianity as a whole.