

STUDY GUIDE FOR THE WEEK OF: January 26, 2008

THE NEXT CHAPTER

REV. STEVE SCHIBSTED

WEEK 1 OF THE SERIES

“OPENING THE NEXT CHAPTER”

Scripture

Matthew 5:13-16

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Study Notes

This week we begin a new series of messages on the new vision for our church. This series will span 8 weeks, leading up to Easter.

Today texts from the Gospel of Matthew outline the mission that God has given to the church. The first passage, Matthew 5:13-16 is found fairly close to the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. The second passage is at the end of the Gospel of Matthew just before Jesus ascends to heaven.

Questions for Personal Reflection and Small Group Discussion

1. What does Jesus mean when he says that his followers are “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world?” What does being salt and light tell us about the mission of the church?
2. The German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: *The church is only the church when it exists for others . . . the church must share in the secular problems of ordinary human life, not dominating, but helping and serving. It must tell people of every calling what it means to live in Christ, to exist for others.* What does it look like (in very practical terms) for a church to be missional, or to exist for others? What problems can arise in a church when it becomes a church for others? What problems can arise in a church if it merely exists for itself?
3. Why is change sometimes difficult for a church?
4. In Matthew 28:16-20, what does Jesus command the church to do? What promise is found in verse 20?
5. What evidence have you seen of God's grace in the lives of the people of Bidwell Presbyterian these last 10 years?
6. Steve said that “he wants to pastor a church that attempts to do things that impossible without the power of God, a church that lives by faith.” What “impossible things” would you like to see God do in our church in the next 5 years? What are some of your dreams for Bidwell?