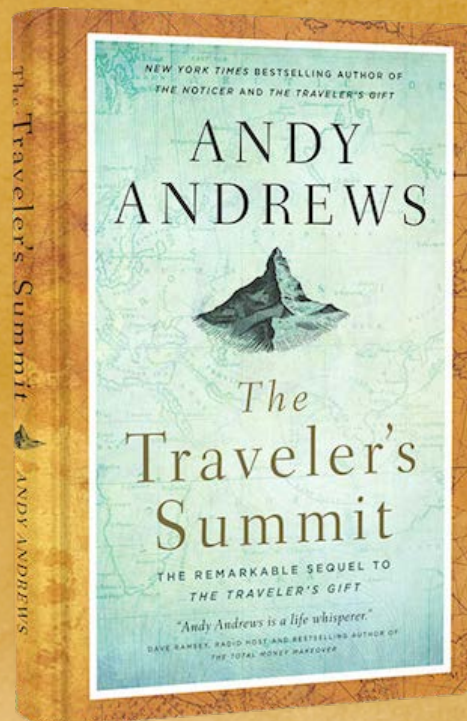


# GOD'S SUMMIT WITH YOU: WORDS TO SAVE HUMANITY

A SIX-PART SERMON SERIES *by* DR. ALAN W. MCBRIDE

PART THREE OF SIX: SHOW COURAGE



*based on*

## *The* Traveler's Summit

ANDY ANDREWS

New York Times BESTSELLING AUTHOR

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## I. INTRODUCTION - ANDY ANDREWS AND The Traveler's Summit

### A. The Most Effective Contemporary Communicator of Biblical Truth

Andy Andrews has quietly become one of the most influential people in America. Through his books and CDs, he has been a godly influence on me personally. In my many years of experience as a pastor, I have never had a person who lovingly challenged me as much to consider the impact my life can have for God's blessing to others. In the beginning and end of it, our lives in Christ are to make a difference in the world and to the people around us.

Andy is making a difference in our world particularly through his writing because of his "story-telling" approach to communicating God's Truth. As an author who is a deeply committed Christian, Andy writes books for audiences much broader than "Christian book" readers. So often, the people reading his books, or hearing him speak, are bathed in biblical teaching about effective living according to God's plan—**and they don't even know it.**

His book, *The Traveler's Summit*, published by Thomas Nelson, is the best example yet of writing for the soul of American culture.

PERSONAL NOTES:

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## I. INTRODUCTION - ANDY ANDREWS AND The Traveler's Summit

### B. Jesus and Zacchaeus: Restoring Hope and Seeking Wisdom

Today, I want to continue to share from God's Word about the choices God is calling each of us to make in order to save humanity. In addition to the scriptures, there is great inspiration and illustration in reading *The Traveler's Summit* as a means of hearing the Holy Spirit's guidance to us to be difference-makers in our world.

Two weeks ago, we studied the beginning of Jesus' public ministry as captured by the Gospel writer Luke. Jesus' announcement in the synagogue in Nazareth, his hometown, signaled the nature of God's fullest plan for humanity through His Son—**Embody Hope**.

In these messages, I drew great direction from *The Traveler's Summit*. This book mirrors this biblical theme in Jesus' public announcement as David Ponder, the original Traveler from *The Traveler's Gift*, is summoned by the archangel Gabriel to a summit of the greatest historical figures from across time. This "traveler's summit" is convened adjacent to the Throne Room of Heaven.

David Ponder is joined by Winston Churchill from the 20th century and Joan of Arc from the 15th century to answer God's question in order to avert judgment on humanity. Gabriel instructs them that there is a two-word answer to the question, "**What does humanity need to do, individually and collectively, to restore itself to the pathway toward successful civilization?**"

The summit members in heaven offer their first answer—**Restore Hope**. While this answer is not the correct solution, Gabriel informs them that restoration of hope is part of the final answer. Abraham Lincoln, from the 19th century, joins the Travelers' summit and they answer again with a two-word response—**Seek Wisdom**.

Seeking wisdom played a huge role, last week, with Zacchaeus. We shared, last week, that Zacchaeus, the tax collector in Luke 19:1-10, sought to catch a glimpse of Jesus passing through Jericho. Zacchaeus was more than curious about Jesus as he sat in the sycamore tree. He was open, searching for **wisdom**. Jesus responded to Zacchaeus' openness first, and then offered salvation. God's word teaches that, ultimately, how we choose to act upon our knowledge of God builds wisdom toward personal salvation and, collectively, to save humanity. We choose to be **Wise in Christ**.

I truly hope that you will take an opportunity to read *The Traveler's Summit*, as it tracks God's plans to save humanity and our part in being difference-makers in God's plan.

Drawing from God's Word to the last two weeks, we have seen that the hope we have in Jesus Christ is the only hope that will save us.

1. Understanding that we are led by God to act on the knowledge we have and can gain about Him, we are invited by God to seek wisdom—be wise in accepting Christ. His wisdom is expressed in saving humanity.

# I. INTRODUCTION - ANDY ANDREWS AND The Traveler's Summit

## C. Cooperate with Jesus - Be A Leader

Jesus Christ desires to speak to you today as he convenes a personal summit with you. His purpose is to encourage you to make choices that will make a difference in your life and in the world—remember, God's plan is for us to cooperate with Him in saving humanity.

To be perfectly clear, for you to be the difference-maker God is calling you to be, you must choose to be a leader. In fact, God's call is for you to accept the mantle of leadership He has already placed across your shoulders. Every follower of Jesus Christ is, by God's nature, a leader. You lead in your family spiritually. You stand out by living His love in your place of work. As a Christian, you lead at school, and through every other sphere of social influence you have, because, by faith, you are a Child of God!

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## II. A SUMMIT WITH GOD'S WORD - MATTHEW 5:13-1

### A. Where to Start?

Recently, a dear lady who was new to our church came to me nearly in a panic. She explained with some tears her regret that she had very little formal background or knowledge of the Christian faith. Because the Holy Spirit had dawned in her consciousness and she had accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord in the few weeks before, she was now ready for a crash course in Christianity—"What does it look like being a follower of Jesus?"

My heart broke in joy and shared frustration as she explained why she was panicking. "I've wasted so much of my life following no one but myself. I need to make up for lost time as quickly as I can, but I don't know how to start."

She held in her hand a brand new bible, "Do you know how much stuff is in here!?!". Looking through her bible, I encouraged her to read four of the "books" and one section of another. I always encourage new believers to read and seek God's leading to understand the Gospel of John, the epistles Ephesians, Philippians, Romans, and finally, chapters 5, 6, and 7 of Matthew's Gospel.

In terms of exposure to theology—right belief—I offer for first-timers John and Romans. Ephesians and Philippians are great for new believers to receive a concise picture of living the Christian life and relationships. But, the greatest way to expose someone hungering for the serenity of Jesus' message and salvation? I steer them toward the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew.

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## II. A SUMMIT WITH GOD'S WORD - MATTHEW 5:13-1

### B. The Text and the Kingdom of God

Jesus' offered His summation of what it means to live in and embody the Kingdom of God in the Sermon on the Mount. This extended teaching section in Matthew covers three entire chapters of scripture from chapter 5 through chapter 7. Within these chapters are themes repeated and lived out again and again in the other Gospels, and throughout the New Testament.

When Jesus addressed the crowd gathered around Him that day to lay out the way of life in His Kingdom, He used an interesting technique in His teaching style. Imagine any story you have ever read. The author always starts small and ends big. In every movie at the theater or on television, the climax comes at the end. The denouement, at the close, wraps up all loose ends for the hearer, reader, or viewer. But, that day on the hillside, among thousands, Jesus started His lesson differently than other teachers with whom the crowd was familiar.

The crowd became quiet to hear Jesus. They were eager because, Matthew states, Jesus astonished His listeners. He taught with obvious authority that exceeded the teachers of Israel—the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus opened His authoritative message by placing the climactic lesson first. After an attention-getting introduction giving hope, the Beatitudes, Jesus gave a simple thesis in five succinct statements, utilizing two illustrations. His brief statements described the essential nature of a royal subject in the Kingdom. The balance of three chapters of teaching hung on these four verses:

<sup>13</sup> “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

<sup>15</sup> Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

<sup>16</sup> Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

## II. A SUMMIT WITH GOD'S WORD - MATTHEW 5:13-1

### C. The "Salt of Canaan" - The Prophets

To the Hebrews of the Old Testament, their prophets were "the salt of the land of Canaan," writes Matthew Henry. Always placed by God to speak God's truth into particular circumstances in the complex history of the Jews, prophets were the flavor of God's holiness, direction, reproof, and judgment. It was in Canaan, the Promised Land, that the Jewish people began to falter, shortly after entering through the Jordan River. They became consistently disobedient regarding God's commandments and statutes. They lacked courage to move forward with God's commandments. It was, therefore, in Canaan that salt from God through His prophets was needed to bring back holy flavor, preserve their integrity as God's people, and penetrate through the minds to the hearts of a People who were to be a living proclamation that God exists. The prophets served as salt in all of Israel.

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## II. A SUMMIT WITH GOD'S WORD - MATTHEW 5:13-1

### D. Jesus' words to you: "You are Salt."

When Jesus calls inhabitants of His Kingdom "salt of the earth," he was subtly making qualitative and geographic direction points regarding you and all people of faith in God.

**Qualitative** - It is not clear whether the crowd who heard this sermon about Jesus' ultimate mission of Kingdom inauguration included believers or non-believers. But, the point of Jesus' salt reference was intended for both groups. All in His hearing were to understand that members of this Kingdom were to be of such a quality that there would be no doubt that they were in God and God in them.

Anyone knows if salt has been added or withheld from food. It is immediately discernable to taste. Christians are to be immediately experienced for who they are—followers and lovers of Jesus. As "salt," you and I are to bring the flavor of Jesus' grace into all aspects of life. You are called to providentially preserve the will of God for humanity, even when rejected by those whom God has called you to save. In the same way salt penetrates anything to which it is applied, you are to be invasive in the culture and every social situation you encounter.

**Geographic** - The prophets of the Old Testament were salt for the region where the Jews resided in Canaan. Jesus said something far more inclusive and expansive. The entire earth is to have salt applied.

In "The Great Commission" at the close of Matthew's Gospel in 28:19, Jesus gave the mission to His disciples to go into all the earth, to every nation of people, to bring salt. For you, this means there is no place in all of creation where His mandate for followers does not apply.

Every place you will ever go, exist in now, or ever have been, is a place and people made available by Jesus' authority to bring His love, tell His story, and change lives for eternity. Understand that **everywhere you go, you are salt!**

## II. A SUMMIT WITH GOD'S WORD - MATTHEW 5:13-1

### E. Jesus' words to you: "You are Light."

The apostle Paul wrote that if we are in Christ, we are a new sort of being compared to ourselves prior to faith. Jesus says that we become Light, contrasted to darkness, in the Kingdom of God. You are to exhibit properties of Light and be purposeful in your living as a Christian.

**Properties of Light** - Light attracts, warms, illuminates, and reaches outward from its source. These properties of light are exactly the properties those who have given themselves over to Jesus are to exhibit everywhere, to everyone. As Jesus' Light, you are to attract others to Jesus by how you live. Just as a fire warms a cold room, you are to change the atmosphere.

Jesus makes it clear in this passage of teaching that it makes no sense to hide a light under a basket. Equally, it is unheard of for a city on a hill to be unseen by anyone who will look. It is absolutely wrong to fail to express the nature that God has remade in you through faith. **You are Light.**

**Purpose of Light** - "Let your light so shine before people that they see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Your nature is not an antiseptic, non-relating sort of light in the far distance. As Jesus' Light, you bring Light from far away to near. You are to bring glory to the Father by the nature of how you impact the world around you.

"Good works" that you do for others and for civilization are intended by Jesus to reflect His Light in you back to God. When you seek to bless others, God is paid a compliment and is "seen in a better light" by others. Therefore, even when you do not express verbal invitation to others to come and know the Love of God in Jesus, they get the message about the nature of the God by the reflective "good works." **Do good works to reflect on your Father.**

### III. GOD'S SUMMIT WITH YOU

#### A. Are You Hindered by Fear?

Imagine Jesus now drawing closer to you in this personal summit. He has already shown you that you are to be salt and light for Him. He asks you a question: "As salt and light, are your next steps hindered by fear?" The question seems odd at this point in your summit with God, but it reflects a reality Jesus knows about you and each one of His children.

Anytime God calls us to step forward in our journey of faith, we resist in some way. In this case, Jesus' teaching challenge to be salt and light means we have to truly step forward in action to and with others. Are you paralyzed by that fear, or will you master it with His help as you exhibit saltiness and light? By the way, fear never comes from God.

My daughter, Laura, is a sophomore in high school. Trust me when I tell you she is a great kid, smarter than most, and knockdown beautiful; I know—I'm her dad.

In this past school year, Laura has bemoaned to me that one or more acquaintances at school have referred to her as a "goodie-two shoes." That's what I would call it—I'm not sure what her school mates actually call it when you are one who points out right and wrong and is a godly champion of fairness and justice.

As a follower of Jesus, from early in her elementary school years, she has been a defender of the downtrodden. If a classmate's homework is stolen, she comforts and encourages the victim and diligently searches out the thief. When a new student comes to school, she speaks pleasantly to her or him and will invite the new kid to sit with her and her friends at lunch. She goes out of her way to ask other students to not use curse words.

In addition to being smart and beautiful, Laura is salt and light. However, it is not always easy for her to be salt and light. She feels called as a Christian to make a difference. Sometimes, her peers ridicule her actions and words to uplift her world.

### III. GOD'S SUMMIT WITH YOU

#### B. Your Nature and Call is to Make a Difference

The clearest lesson you need to know in this personal summit with Christ is that you are, by the nature of God placed in us by our faith, a person called to **make a difference** in the world. In *The Traveler's Summit*, David Ponder is actually positioned by God to be one who makes a difference in the world by finding the answer to the question of how to restore civilization to the path that will save it from judgment. This is your calling!

PERSONAL NOTES:

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### III. GOD'S SUMMIT WITH YOU

#### C. Abraham's Personal Summit with God

1,900 years before Christ, a man named Abram had a personal summit with God. In fact, it was the first time since Noah that anyone had a summit with God—perhaps thousands of years. In that encounter, God told Abram to pick up and go. Literally, without a road map or any more detail than that he was to take his family with him, God called him to move out.

In Genesis 12, God told Abram that He would guide him and be with him through a journey that would **make a difference** for the world for all time. God told Abram, "I will make of you a great people." Through Abram, later named Abraham by God, all people of faith in God, through historical Judaism and now through Christianity, have been blessed by God to be His salt and light. God then told him, "In you, all the families (people) of the earth shall be blessed."

This world changing, civilization blessing mission God first placed on Abraham took courage. It takes courage to drop everything where you are and move out with all your family and follow God. There is no indication that Abram was fearless. In fact, there are numerous times he exhibited fear and doubt in the biblical account of his answering the call of God. Still, Abraham moved forward.

PERSONAL NOTES:

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## IV. CONCLUSION: SHOW COURAGE

### A. No Fear or Doubt - You Need Courage

You are called to join with others in following Abraham's mission too. You are called to be a leader of others. You are called to make a difference in civilization. But, **you need courage**. You need to master the fear of rejection, overcome doubt that stifles truly God-called missions to be His salt and light.

In *The Traveler's Summit*, the author writes two incredibly powerful thoughts about courage. First, **courage is contagious**. Just as hope "catches" in other people when you display God's hope, when you move with courage, Andrews says, "Courage expands the minds and hearts of others in its presence. One person with courage forms an immediate majority, and others are caught up in his wake." Since every child of God is a leader, you will lead others to have courage too!

Second, Andrews writes that "courage appears when we care very deeply about something or someone." There is no greater cause into which we can pour our passion. Imagine the deep joy of seeing other people find a relationship with the Lord of Life because of your influence as a leader for Him. Receive permission to be passionately connected with your purpose. Andy Andrews says the **by-product of passion is courage**. You and I care very deeply about where God's passion is directed—saving humanity! It is our call as salt and light.

PERSONAL NOTES:

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## IV. CONCLUSION: SHOW COURAGE

### B. "I will be with you every step of the way."

When Abraham moved out at God's call, God was with him every step of the way. God gave Abraham **courage** and power to be the one through whom God would bless all the people of the earth.

Jesus said you are to be salt and light and make a difference! He also said the purpose of your life in Him, your mission, is to bring others into a relationship with Him. But, listen also to what He says to you (and me) now: "I will be with you, every step of the way."

I find that the **greatest power in the world** is a faithful man or woman, boy or girl, who proceeds along the direction of Jesus' purpose for them with passion. They accomplish great things for God's Kingdom because they are **courageous**; they withstand the slings and arrows of criticism; they push forward because the Spirit of Jesus Christ is actually in them and bringing comfort to them. Being Jesus' salt and light actually opens you to having courage because He enables and empowers you to carry forward. The very real person, presence, and power of Jesus are with you!

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## IV. CONCLUSION: SHOW COURAGE

### C. Receive God's Gift of Courage

James wrote in his epistle in the New Testament that "God is the giver of every good and perfect gift." (James 1:17) In this personal summit today with Jesus, all you need to do is accept the **good gift of courage**. Don't doubt for a moment. Do not fear. He is with you and He wants to give you courage to carry out His purposes as salt and light.

Let us pray:

"Oh God, You are the giver of every perfect gift. There is no changing of direction in You. Now, You desire my friends and I to receive what we need to carry forward Your call to be salt and light in the world. We need the gift of courage.

Lord, I now receive the gift You desire to give me. I will be courageous because You are with me. In Your holy Name.

Amen.

PERSONAL NOTES:

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