

You Are the Salt of the Earth and Light of the World

SUNDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2023 / GOSPEL READING: Matthew 5:13-16

13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men. 14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. 15 Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Meditation: Jesus used ordinary images, such as salt and light, to convey extraordinary truths that transform our minds, hearts, and lives. What does salt and light have to teach us about God and the transforming power of his kingdom? Salt was a valuable commodity in the ancient world. People traded with it, like we trade with valuable goods, such as gold and stock. Salt also served a very useful purpose, especially in warmer climates before the invention of electricity and refrigeration. Salt not only gave rich flavour to food, it also preserved food from going bad and being spoiled.

The salt of God's kingdom for all

Jesus used the image of salt to describe the transforming effect of God's work in our lives - and how the Holy Spirit wants to work through us to bring the power and blessing of God's kingdom to others. As salt purifies, preserves, and produces rich flavour for our daily food, we, too, as disciples of Jesus, are "salt" for the world of human society. The Lord wants to work in and through us to purify, preserve, and spread the rich flavour of God's kingdom everywhere - his "kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

Don't lose your saltiness

What did Jesus mean by the expression "if salt has lost its taste... it is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot" (Matthew 5:13)? Salt in the ancient world was often put into ovens to intensify the heat. When the salt was burned off and no longer useful it was thrown out on the ground where it would easily get stepped on and swept away (Matthew 5:13). How can we lose our "saltiness"? When we allow the world, sin, and Satan to corrupt us. The Lord wants us to preserve our "saltiness" - through virtuous living and rejection of sin - not only for our own sake but also for the sake of others.

The aroma of Christ in the world

Paul the Apostle reminds us that we are called to be "the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life" (2 Corinthians 2:15-16). Do you allow the fragrance of Christ's love, truth, and holiness to permeate every area of your life, your thoughts, words, actions, and relationships?

Light that shines for all to see

Jesus used the image of light and a lamp to further his illustration of God's transforming work in and through us. Lamps in the ancient world served a vital function, much like they do today. They enable people to see and work in the dark and to avoid stumbling. The Jews also understood "light" as symbol or expression of the inner beauty, truth, and goodness of God. *In his light we see light* (Psalm 36:9). *His word is a lamp that guides our steps* (Psalm 119:105). God's grace not only illumines the darkness in our lives, but it also fills us with spiritual light, joy, and peace.

Jesus used the image of a lamp to describe how his disciples are to live in the light of his truth and love. Just as natural light illumines the darkness and enables one to see visually, so the light of Christ shines in the hearts of believers and enables us to see the heavenly reality of God's kingdom. Our mission is to be *light-bearers* of Jesus Christ so that others may see the truth of the gospel and be freed from the blindness of sin and deception.

There is great freedom and joy for those who live in the light of God's truth and goodness. Do you know the joy and freedom of living in God's light?

Daily Quote from the Early Church Fathers: *The Light of Truth*, by Chromatics (died 406 AD) The Lord has already called his disciples the "salt of the earth" because they seasoned with divine wisdom the hearts of the human race which had been made tasteless by the devil. Now he also calls them the "light of the world." For, illumined by his very own self who is the true and eternal light, they too become light within the darkness. For since he himself is the *sun of righteousness*, he rightly also calls his disciples "light of the world." Through them, as if through shining rays, he poured the light of his knowledge on the entire world. For by showing the light of truth, the Lord's disciples made the darkness of error flee from people's hearts.

OPENING PRAYER: - **Lord Jesus**, you guide me by the light of your saving truth. Fill my heart and mind with your light and truth and free me from the blindness of sin and deception that I may see your ways clearly and understand your will for my life. May I radiate your light and truth to others in word and deed. **Amen**

CLOSING PRAYER:- **"World Peace"** Lord, we pray for the victims in Ukraine that they have the strength to forgive the Military forces that are attacking them and the leaders of these forces cease such aggression and repent for their sins. May we put our trust in the power of good, to overcome evil, and the power of love, to overcome hatred.

We pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe in a world emancipated from violence, where no longer men commit injustice, or bring suffering to others. **Amen.**