

Being Salty
2.5.17

Matthew 5:13-20 New Living Translation (NLT)

13 *"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.*

14 *"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. **15** No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. **16** In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

17 *"Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. **18** I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. **19** So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

20 *"But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!" (Matthew 5:13-20 NLT)*

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

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Opening story

We are living in a time of incredible *“theological, social and moral change.”* *“The... Christian faith is in decline.”* Like our country, *“the United Methodist Church”* is greatly divided *“with very different ideas about the future...”* *“Congregations are shrinking, buildings are being sold. People are... worshiping in different places and spaces and redefining what it means to be Christian and Methodist in a ... rapidly changing culture. The present is unstable, and the future seems uncertain.”* (Dr. Dawn Chesser, Discipleship Ministries)

How are we to live as Jesus' disciples? How are we to practice our faith? How are we to share it with others?

Jesus says: *“You are the salt of the earth.”*

We are *“to bring out the flavor of the world around us.”*

Jesus says: *You are the light of the world.”*

We are *“to shine God's love into the despair and fear around us. Our goodness is to be so obvious, that, through our presence, the very presence of God's love and grace is felt in those around us.”* (Dr. Dawn Chesser)

Are we willing to be salty and bright for Jesus?

In the past few weeks, we have journeyed with Jesus from His Baptism, to the calling of His first Disciples. *“Come and See.”* He Says. *“Come, Follow Me.”*

This morning, we find the words of Jesus, in the section of Matthew's Gospel of known as the *“Sermon on the Mount.”* Jesus addresses the crowd:

¹³*You are like salt for everyone on earth. But if salt no longer tastes like salt, how can it make food salty? All it is good for is to be thrown out and walked on.* (Matthew 5:13 CEV)

Eugene Peterson puts it this way:

¹³*Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.*(Matt 5:13 MSG)

Jesus spoke to the crowds: *“You are salt!”*

They were plain, ordinary folks from near Galilee. They weren't *Biblical scholars, teachers of the Law, religious giants.* or *“church people.”* Most of them were not even followers of Jesus.

“You are salt!”

In Jesus' day... Salt was a mixture of a variety of compounds. The more salts in those compounds, the more valuable it was, because the saltier it tasted; but the more "fillers" in the mix, the less salty, and therefore, the less valuable the salt.

So the blessing, *“You are salt”* came with the expectation to be salty. Be real. Be authentic! Don't dilute what God's kingdom is already doing in and through you. (GBOD Worship)

According to Myron Augsburger... one of the functions of salt was flavor. *Salt makes food taste more authentic, Salt is not used on food so that one can taste salt, but rather to bring out the best flavor in the food.”* (Myron Augsburger, Communicator's Commentary, Matthew, © 1982 Word, p 68)

You Are Salt! We Are Salt! We are witnesses. We have influence. We are to Be Salty.

The question is, have we lost our saltiness? Have we lost our flavor?

Are we no longer useful? Are we still Salty?

"*You are the salt of the earth.*" Bring out the BEST in those around you.

Jesus also said: "You are light for the world!"

¹⁴⁻¹⁶"*Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! ... be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.*" (Matthew 5:14-16 The Message)

Similar to salt, the purpose of a light is not to draw attention to itself. Rather, Light serves as a guide for travelers, to illumine the path.

As disciples, we are not to draw attention to ourselves, but rather to simply point the way to God/True Light. Jesus used two images to illustrate the purpose of the light.

a) CITY ON A HILL~ is highly visible for all to see. the light helps illuminate the city, so the city, not simply the lights, can be seen.

b) CANDLE ON A LAMPSTAND - by simply being present, dispels the darkness. One little candle chases away darkness. The purpose of the light is to illuminate the way of God for others. When others see the good that is done, they will honor and glorify God. In order for others to see this light, we must live in such a way that Christ's light shines in us and through us. (Myron Augsburger, Communicator's Commentary, Matthew, © 1982 Word, p. 68)

+ "You are salt! You are light!"

Be Salty. Be Bright.

In her book, Out of the Salt Shaker and Into the World, Rebecca Manley Pippert asks, How can we be the salt of the earth if we never get out of the salt shaker? (Pippert, Rebecca Manley, Out of the Salt Shaker and Into the World, © 1979, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, pp. 124)

Now, she is not saying that we need to beat people over the head with our Bible and try to change everyone's mind! But she is saying, that being a Witness is something we are, whether we know it or not.

Come and See. Come and follow.
You are salt! You are light!

Be Salty! *Bring out the best in others! Get out of the Salt Shaker!* Be the presence of Christ wherever you go.

Be Bright! *Point others toward the True Light! Shine the Light in the Darkness!*

May we be **Salty and Bright** as we influence others. Amen.