

Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

In his opening discourse, Jesus highlights nine beatitudes or states of happiness that we must attain, if we wish to follow him. We learn that the heart of discipleship is openness to God. With God reigning in our hearts, we will naturally seek his ways of truth & goodness & from this will flow peace, gentleness, mercy, longing for justice, concern for others. Those who are seeking to live these qualities, already possess the kingdom, although in a hidden manner. Now Jesus tells us, that we must allow his kingdom, his reign to break out in everything we say and do. The images of salt & light are used by Matthew to inspire us as disciples, to give us a sense of our vocation. No one can call himself a disciple of Jesus, unless he is living the beatitudes, and in so doing, becoming a source of strength and light to his neighbour. How can I bring light and strength to my neighbour today?

Prayer After Communion

O God, who have willed that we be partakers in the one Bread and the one Chalice, grant us, we pray, so to live that, made one in Christ, we may joyfully bear fruit for the salvation of the world.

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
5th February 2023

Salt of the Earth, Light of the World - to the Glory of the Father



St Matthew wrote his gospel around 70-80 AD to a largely Jewish audience and he seeks to show that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, the fulfilment of the Old Testament. His gospel is woven around five great discourses given by Jesus, and in this, Matthew may have modelled his gospel on the Pentateuch - the first five books of the Old Testament. He may also be presenting the gospel as the new Torah (the Book of the Law), with Jesus as a new and greater Moses - the Law Giver.

Last Sunday we began reading the first great discourse - The "Sermon on the Mount". Today we continue to follow Jesus' teaching. We, who are privileged to hear the words of the Saviour, MUST live and share his words with everyone we meet. We must truly become salt to the earth, light to the world.

Opening Prayer

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care, that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace, they may be defended always by your protection.

Isaiah 58:7-10

Thus says the Lord: Share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor, clothe the man you see to be naked and do not turn from your own kin. Then will your light shine like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over. Your integrity will go before you and the glory of the Lord behind you. Cry, and the Lord will answer; call, and he will say, 'I am here.' If you do away with the yoke, the clenched fist, the wicked word, if you give your bread to the hungry, and relief to the oppressed, your light will rise in the darkness, and your shadows become like noon.

Today's passage, coming near the end of the Book of Isaiah, is addressed to the returning exiles. They are seeking to shape and find meaning to their lives and to rebuild their communities through electing politicians and focusing on the observance of rules and regulations, but the prophet tells them, that they will only succeed and find life, when they seek to live God's love: share your bread with the hungry; welcome the homeless; clothe the naked. Living as God's children entails duties of justice. When we perform these, our lives and community will shine with God's glory.

Psalm 111(112):4-9

*He is a light in the darkness for the upright: he is generous, merciful and just.
The good man takes pity and lends, he conducts his affairs with honour.*

*The just man will never waver: he will be remembered for ever.
He has no fear of evil news; with a firm heart he trusts in the Lord.*

*With a steadfast heart he will not fear; open-handed, he gives to the poor;
his justice stands firm for ever. His head will be raised in glory.*

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

When I came to you, brothers, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed. During my stay with you, the only knowledge I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about him as the crucified Christ. Far from relying on any power of my own, I came among you in great 'fear and trembling' and in my speeches and the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. And I did this so that your faith should not depend on human philosophy but on the power of God.

It is God's message, not the preacher that matters. Paul comes amongst the Corinthians, not as one of the 12 Apostles, nor as a trained philosopher or polished speaker, yet he has been called & chosen by God, in his frailty, to preach the crucified Christ. The Gospel stands alone and is not changed or enhanced by philosophical argument or polished rhetoric. In fact, the weakness of the preacher enforces the gospel - the folly of the cross! We can only receive God's message through his grace. Let us welcome God's Word, especially when we feel far from him... in our sin, in our fear, in our weakness; then let us turn to him, for '*When I am weak, then I am strong*'. (2 Cor.12: 9-11)

***Alleluia, alleluia! I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
anyone who follows me will have the light of life. children. Alleluia!***

Offertory Prayer

O Lord, our God, who once established these created things to sustain us in our frailty, grant, we pray, that they may become for us now the Sacrament of eternal life.