

Good Morning! Let us pray... *Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle within us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created And you shall renew the face of the earth. O God who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy your consolations, through Christ our Lord. May the words of my mouth & the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing in your sight...rock & redeemer of us all. Amen*

“Lighting the Way, part 2: We are Light Bearers” Matthew 5:13-20 (Isaiah 58:11-12)

We are in the season of Light... after the Epiphany or the revelation of Jesus to the world, marked by the visitation of the Wise Ones in Bethlehem. In John's gospel we hear that Jesus is the Light of the World... the Word made flesh...putting aside his full divinity to be fully human.

We have listened to how Jesus insisted he be marked by water (baptism) to begin his ministry to the world.

We heard Jesus engage with people who saw something different in him... Jesus invited them to follow him. Jesus called/invited fishermen and told them they would learn to fish for people.

We have been reading from Matthew's gospel of Jesus' first teaching. In the scripture last week we read about the promised blessings God has for the poor in spirit & the hopeless; the blessings God for those who are grieving and sad; blessings for those hungry & thirsting for justice; blessings for those who show mercy & those who have pure hearts; and blessings for those who make peace, and blessings for those who are persecuted because of their beliefs.

Each of these blessings speaks to challenges people have in their daily life...when it is hard to get up... hard to get along...hard to feel that someone cares. And there are blessings for those who show kindness, and comfort, and help people get along...especially when they have been bullied, left out, or kicked to the curb.

The text we read today continues Jesus teaching. Jesus speaks to what we are to do as the people of God. Jesus says...You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world.

We've already talked a bit about SALT. Salt is a mineral found in the earth. It has long been important to human life. Our bodies need salt (not too much, not too little, just enough). Salt is a preservative... a purifier, and a preventative. DID you know, that masks coated in salt could neutralize viruses...studies are currently underway (Business Insider/science/2020Feb08)!

We even demonstrated how salt acts as a flavor enhancer... and how it sweetens/suppresses bitterness! Salt was very valuable in the ancient world and was a key element on the trade routes of 1st century.

Each of us is to live as a flavor enhancer, a preserver, one who purifies, and heals. Let's think on that for a moment...what would that look like to be as salt...removing bitterness, starting healing, enhancing flavor?

The second image...you are the Light of the World...wow, that seems like a huge expectation! Except, remember what Jesus has taught... or actually re-taught and re-presented...to love God and to love God's people, to be kind, to walk with humility, to be a peacemaker, to forgive. These are the way we are to be Light to the world.

For those who have been or are involved in Scouting, whatever rank or troop or den or pack...you know how familiar this sounds...there's a lot of Jesus' teaching echoed in the Scout law, promise and motto.

When we do our best, be our best, care for others, and remember to honor our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of all life, we are Salt and Light in the World.

Jesus chooses each one of us, empowers us, and sends us out to do things in his name beyond what we can imagine. Let us remember We are Salt, and we are the Light Bearers!

Let's join together in response to this good news!

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

God's love satisfies our needs.

God's righteousness lights our path.

God's justice calls us to care for others.

May it be so. So be it. Amen.

PASTOR

**Like a spring that never runs dry,
God waters the gardens of our
souls.**

**Like a lamp on a stand,
God illuminates our hearts.**

**Let us be Menders, Restorers,
Healers.**

We are the Light of the World.