

Matthew 5:13-20 Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Sermon: You are the Light of the world!

I am a modern type of girl so, once I hear light, I start thinking Solar panels, ultraviolet rays, LED light bulbs but if ask my seven-year-old son he'll tell you fireflies. Apparently, it's a matter of perspective! But what about our light? That little sparkle God had put in each and every one of us.

Light is the predominant symbol in the expression of the Christian faith. This light doesn't originate from us but rather passes through us because it is our divine gift. Sometimes, we forget that we are children of God and we don't let our light shine in the world like we ought to do. One way we can do so is by encouraging others to use their talents. Quite often, a church can have several gifted people, but lack of confidence may stop us from stepping up to different roles. Some of us are crippled by self-doubt. However, today, I am asking you to let your light shine! Become that Sunday School teacher you always wanted to be! Join the altar guild! Go visit our fellow parishioners who have been on the sick and shut-in list. Go to our organist also known as Ranger Todd from Vacation Bible School and let him know that you wish to join the choir. One of the many songs that I learned in Sunday School when I first came to this country was “This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it

shine” and I also taught it to my son. I still sing it til this day. It reminds me to be the light that God meant for me to be! Yes, we live in this world, but we are not of this world! We are the chosen ones! Heirs of the Kingdom! God’s children! Our community is our congregation so what we do should not be limited within the walls of the church but should make an impact on our neighborhood and in the bigger world. This is one way the church can shine as light in the world! Claiming that we are Christians is important, but what we do to show Christ to others is of greater importance! We need to seek opportunities to serve Christ and our neighbors because salvation is all that matters. Also, we tend to put limitations on others too. I have been in spaces where people underestimated what I could do based on my gender. They wanted to assign things to me; things they thought were easier for a girl to handle. When we do that to people, we do them a disservice with that type of reaction because we don’t know God’s plans for them and this is something we need to be aware of!

In today’s passage, Jesus mentioned salt. He not only loved to speak in parables but used metaphors as well. Salt can be used as a preservative, an agent of purification or seasoning. Salt changes what it touches. In verse 13, when Jesus said “You are the salt of the earth” meaning us Christians are the ones to influence others positively. With all the moral problems in this world, we need to stand up for what is right! Sometimes, we need to be a voice for those who don’t have a voice and that includes immigrants, the marginalized and the oppressed. Also, when life gets tough, we all need a little help or like that song by Bill Withers that says **“You just call on me brother, when you need a hand. We all need somebody to lean on! I just might have a problem that you'll understand. We all need somebody to lean on.”** The truth is that we cannot see colors in the dark! People facing

depression and addiction tend to have a pessimistic view of things because they feel like they have lost control of their lives, especially if that depression or addiction has cost them their jobs, careers and relationships. Instead of looking down on them, this is the time to help them get on their feet and remind them that they too are children of God and that they matter. These moments are opportunities for us to bring them to Christ, not moments to humiliate them. They might not be Christian nor ever opened a Bible but yet they are forming impressions of our God based on how we act towards them. We can have a profound influence on others if what we do prove to them that God lives within us indeed. Caring for others is sharing the good news with them, which is one way of expressing our love for them. Love is the experience of grace given in relationships with another. So, love is a gift (agape), something that we find hard to explain. However, we can express love through our words backed up by our actions.

In verse 14 Jesus speaks of a city built on a hill which cannot be hidden. The reference is to Jerusalem, the Holy City where God dwelt. It could not be hidden because its purpose was to stand before all as a witness of God's presence to His people. So it should also be with us Christians because lights are to give light! The Christian life can give light to a world looking for direction. Yes, there are times when we are in a dry season and are not producing fruits but technically, our salt cannot lose its saltiness because The Holy Spirit is already in us. We just gotta get to action and fulfill our purpose as children of God. We get to demonstrate our saltiness when we lead others to glorify God. Today I'm encouraging all of you not to give up until the silence in your heart starts to speak and gives you enough courage to be bold and show it. Let others know that you love and care for them.

Conclusion: My brothers and sisters in Christ, the kind of righteousness Jesus advocates is focused on loving our neighbors and redeeming and restoring the world, but that work begins with us. Seeds grow underground in the dark so do not panic about what you can't see because that is when God does the work on us. Pray for God to fill you with the Holy Spirit because He will send people into your life to guide you and help you reach your destination, and you will eventually realize that there is light where you thought there could not be light! If you're still trying to find Christ, pray that God would guide you through the Holy Spirit. God works through our darkest moments and remember not to dim your light to fit in the world but to shine indeed! Amen!