

Sunday, February 8, 2026
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
Pastor Jane Gingrich
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Isaiah 58:1-9a
Psalms 112:1-9
1 Corinthians 2:1-12
Matthew 5:13-20

¹³“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. ¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In 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.

¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For 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. ¹⁹Therefore, 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. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (NRSV)

You are enough.

We are enough.

[*pause*]

Right at the start of our gospel reading this morning,

Jesus tells the disciples- the ones following him;

who have been told by their community that they are lowly,

the ones who are despised,

the ones who are told that their existence doesn't matter.

The ones who are starting to focus on themselves because all that's happening beyond them is overwhelming and depressing...

To THESE-

Jesus says: You ARE the salt of the earth.

The whole earth depends on the ones who the world rejects.

[*pause*]

Long-ago Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote-

"You are the salt" - not "you should be the salt"!

The disciples are given no choice whether they want to be salt or not.

No appeal is made to them to *become* salt of the earth.

Rather they just are salt, whether they want to or not,

by the power of the call which has reached them."¹

This Gospel is a continuation of the call to discipleship.

Jesus expands on what we heard last week about those who are blessed.

Part of God's blessings for the Body of Christ is who we become.

Salt.

Light.

Enough.

[*pause*]

I keep thinking about how it is *not* easy to be a Lutheran these days.

Perhaps we could say that it is not easy to be any person of faith;

But I can only speak from experience as a Lutheran:

[*pause*]

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Discipleship, "Sermon on the Mount", p.112 (emphasis my own)

We're one of 41,000 or so different divisions within Christianity-

And here where I live at the meeting of the waters called Kamloops, there are still yet two other kinds of Lutherans... three denominations of Lutherans, one city.

Isn't it sad?

We are so divided as people of God that we literally meet in separate houses all over the city every Sunday morning.

(I'm not saying that I want to go over and spontaneously join another congregation... I'm not *that* easy-going);

But I do wonder at being so split apart.

In the divisions we live it is really common to get focused on our own piece of the pie to the exclusion of all others.

We focus on ourselves and what we're up to;

We look at our own needs, and our own aches and pains...

...yet, still here among us there are signs of good flavour and light even in all this brokenness of worldly living.

Gathering in community and standing together against harm;

Sharing in the faith of another with stories as we've recognized World Interfaith Harmony this last week;

Drawing neighbours together around a shared meal.

Praying for one another as we continue on our day's journey.

[*pause*]

Gathering, story-telling, meal, prayer, sending: *worship forms us in and for life.*

While it can be tough not to get bogged down in seeing all these division as ongoing brokenness and giving in to worldly egoism-

we can also see that here is grand and important diversity offered by such a variety of traditions and households...

So do not despair at the vastness of religious expression!

Stand together and pray for one another.

[pause]

This is the world we live in;

even as, Christ calls us to another reality of life:

Salt, and Light.

There are many who still question,

wonder, and sit uncomfortably in the grace of God.

[pause]

Because an easy faith tells us that we are better,

more *right*, and justified to the exclusion of all others.

But that is not who we are called to be.

God offers us an unearned – un-earn-able – gracious, freely-given-gift of life.

But the thing is, the “**us**” is *everyone*!

[pause]

The power and authority of God are unlimited.

We are the ones who continuously limit what God can do.

[*pause*]

We have a tendency to buy into society's hierarchical nature.

But as salt and light in the world, we are called to responsibility.

[*pause*]

AND: we are given the opportunity to respond.

Remembering that we are salt-
ones who share outward;
ones who become part of the much great whole all around us in order to bring
flavour;
ones who focus beyond ourselves as soon as we are needed!

And remembering that we are light- brightness, luminescence, shining for all;
giving away our energies for all to see and share.

Followers living for the other...

In gratitude for the gifts we first receive;

as we are changed by the waters of baptism;

and refreshed with the gifts of God's sacrament in Holy Communion:

We are sent into the world.

It is tempting to ask: "okay, so what are we supposed to DO in the world?"

But in the Word of God shared this morning,

We hear again that it is not what we are called to “do”;

but who we are called to be.

[*pause*]

Salt and light. Enough.

[*pause*]

Helpers, guides, reflections of God’s gifts to the world:

in response to the gracious gifts

of communion- community;

of baptism- salvation;

God gives us lives that mirror to all who God is for the world.

[*pause*]

With so much dis-ease in the world around us,

this invitation to be God’s people is not easy.

And yet, God has not sent us to be alone.

[*pause*]

Together, you are the Beloved of God who share Christ's gifts.

Together, we are called to be for the world the example of God's hope.

Together, we receive, we share,

Because all that we are given is for the world to share.

[*pause*]

A message often shared by the sisters at the local mosque here is the message of today's Gospel:

“We are stronger together.”

Salt, one grain, does not affect our soup or our bread.

Light, one single wave of a beam is hardly visible in the darkness.

But together salt grains and light waves make a difference.

Together the flavour is richer.

Together the light is brighter.

We are stronger together.

Christ affirms in this gospel that by being who we are together as the
Body of Christ, that our gifts - vast and varied as they are -
will be best used by God for the world.

Because all that we have comes from God,
in our worship together,
we continue to be formed and prepared for the week ahead.

When we recognize our part- small, but important,
giving flavour and light to the world that needs us.
We are changed.

God with us.

God in us.

God for us.

Leads us into the world for all.

Together, we are enough.

May it be so.