



## “I’m Gonna Let it Shine! Light”

### Fifth Sunday After Epiphany

Saturday & Sunday, February 8 & 9, 2020

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Matthew 5:13-20

A couple of weeks ago, I sat down with Pastor Horner to review my job description as the Pastor for Engagement here at Trinity. We talked about my role as a leader in worship, as a preacher. We also talked about my role in the volunteer ministry of this church, especially in my role – as I see it – as chief encourager of serving God and our neighbors, and as your go-to person for getting involved in service within Trinity and outside of Trinity. Like me, each of you may have or had a job description that detailed your responsibilities in your job and vocation.

Did you know that Jesus gives us a job description as well? We just heard it in our story from Matthew for today. In this story – just after sharing the Beatitudes that we heard last week – Jesus sits with his disciples and gives them their job description. Jesus says, “Be salt. Be light. Be who you are called to be, who you are capable of being by the grace of God in the world and for the sake of the world.”

So, what does this mean? What is Jesus calling us to be, to do as salt and light? Well, the Message translation of our Bible gives us some clarity – sheds some light – on what Jesus might mean here. The Message reads: “You’re here to be the salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth.”

“You’re here to be the salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth.” Think about this like we use salt in our cooking. I read a bunch of cooking blogs in preparation for my sermon this week because I wanted to know what salt does when we add a pinch to sautéed vegetables or sprinkle it on a baked potato at the dinner table. Now, I’m not the best cook, so I learned a lot about the use of salt in cooking this week.

When we add salt to a dish, salt is not added to draw attention to itself. We add salt to a dish to enhance the blended flavors of the other ingredients. Simply, salt enhances other flavors. So, if we are called to be salt, we are called to enhance – to build up – the work God is already doing in our world. We are called to partner with God, not for our sake as salt, but for the sake of God’s whole dish – the whole world.

We are also called to be light. The Message says, “You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.” “You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.” Our calling as God’s light is not to be seen, but to let other things – other people – be seen. Last week, we heard the Beatitudes:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the peacemakers...”

Letting others be seen is living the Beatitudes. Letting others be seen is shedding light on the injustice in our world and acting to change it. Letting others be seen is feeding the hungry. Letting others be seen is comforting those who are hurt. Letting others be seen is giving and receiving forgiveness. Letting others be seen is caring for the vulnerable: the young, the old, the forgotten, and the oppressed.

Salt is our identity. Light is our identity, friends. But there is also a holy responsibility as disciples of Jesus, as God's salt and light. Karoline Lewis, professor of preaching at Luther Seminary, writes this: “It's one thing to know and claim your identity. It's another thing entirely to live it...for the sake of (the world)...for the sake of the kingdom of heaven coming to pass here and now and not just in our future.” I was struck by her words this week. I was convicted by her words this week. How often do we claim our identity as followers of Jesus, but are truly only followers of Jesus in name only?

Lewis puts this idea another way. She writes, “Jesus reminds us that knowledge of God cannot exist as simply knowledge. It is not enough to know about God. As disciples, we (are called) to be the activity of God in the world.”

So, this calling from Jesus is urgent. This calling is meant for now; it is a calling for this moment. Why? Just look at the state of our world right now. Our world is broken. It is divided. There seems to be little that unites us. Our world is full of injustice. Our world is saturated in intolerance. Our world shouts hatred. And friends, none of these things are what God calls us to participate in.

Our world desperately needs God. Our world desperately needs salt and light. And this is why we are here, friends. This is why we are on this earth. God created us to be salt. God created us to be light. And not for ourselves, but for the sake of our world – this world that God so lovingly created.

So be salt. Be light. Amen.

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