

Sunday Message

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 5 February 2023 • Psalter Week 1



The key to today's Gospel is the two sayings comparing the disciples to salt and light. Both begin with the words "You are..." and then draw out lessons from these two natural elements.

Salt was an essential commodity for life. In an era before refrigeration, it was used to preserve food or add flavour. Salt was an essential item of trade in the ancient world. The Dead Sea in Palestine was rich in minerals, including salt, but it was not always of the highest quality because of the presence of other minerals in it. Salt doesn't easily lose its flavour, but it can become damp and difficult to use. When that happens, all you can do is throw it away.

Disciples are to become "salt of the earth". The word "earth" should be understood here in its general sense of "the world". By their way of life, especially one that is modelled on the beatitudes, they will impart flavour to the world and preserve it from going bad.

Disciples must also be a light to the world. Towns in the ancient world were often built on top of hills for defensive purposes, as the hill offered protection from an invading army. Even if protected by a wall, a town on a hillside could not be hidden from view. In the same way, the lifestyle of the disciples of Jesus should be visible to all and mark them out as different.

The short parable-like saying about what people do when they light a lamp develops the same theme. Lamps are intended to give light. It would be foolish to light a lamp and hide it under a bucket, except if the house was in danger of being burgled. The light the disciple of Jesus will shed on the world comes from his or her good deeds. ■

REFLECT

Salt has a bad reputation today. Doctors tell us that too much of it is bad for us, that it increases the risk of heart attacks and other illnesses. It's not the sort of news that salt lovers like to hear.

But while health-wise there may be such a thing as too much salt, faith-wise there is no such thing as too much salt.

Jesus tells us that we are the salt of the earth. Like good salt, our lives must add fresh flavour to our world. But how precisely do we add that flavour?

By practising what we profess in church every day, by being faithful to our Christian calling as best we can, by trying to live up to the radical challenge spelled out so strongly for us by the prophet Isaiah in today's first reading. That's what being salt of the earth means.

Even if you reduce the amount of salt you put in your dinner or pour onto your chips, you must never cut back on the Christian witness you are called to give every day.

There is no better compliment than to be referred to as "salt of the earth".

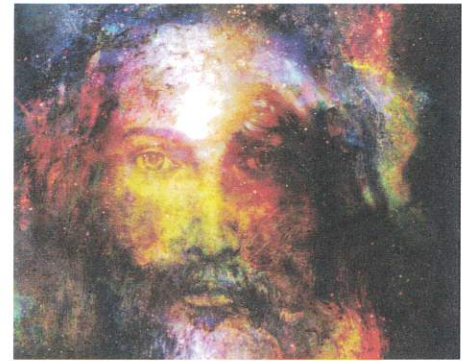
LEARN

Jesus is the light of the world.

Our Christian faith can never be a private matter, something we keep hidden. It must be out there, shining bright for all to see.

DO

Jesus is the light of the world. As his followers, we must be a light to our world also. Look at your life, your values, your behaviour. What kind of light do you shine? For help on how to be a light to others, read the words of Isaiah in today's first reading.



SAY

Lord, help me to be a beacon of your presence in our world. Give me the courage to shine your light everywhere. Amen.

PRAY

Pray for people living in the darkness of depression or experiencing tremendous financial or family difficulties. Ask the Lord to be with them, to fill them with his light and love.



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

O come, let us worship God
and bow low before the God who made us,
for he is the Lord our God.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the
Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

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.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 58:7-10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord:

Share your bread with the hungry,
and shelter the homeless poor,
clothe the man you see to be naked
and turn not 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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 111

Response:

The good man is a light in the darkness for
the upright.

or
Alleluia!

1. He is 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. (R.)

2. 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. (R.)

3. 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. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians.

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 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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

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

GOSPEL

Matthew 5:13-16

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with

the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory

to judge the living and the dead

and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,

who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead

and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

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.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Let them thank the Lord for his mercy,
his wonders for the children of men,
for he satisfies the thirsty soul,
and the hungry he fills with good things.

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.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Do not grieve over temptations you suffer.
When the Lord intends to bestow a particular
virtue on us, he often permits us first to be
tempted by the opposite vice. Therefore, look
upon every temptation as an invitation to
grow in a particular virtue and promise God
that you will be successful, if only you stand
fast.

St Philip Neri