

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**  
**February, 2023**  
*Matthew 5:13-20*

Next week the Super Bowl will be played. Did you realize that a 30 second ad at the Super Bowl could cost seven million dollars! There will be ads for Doritos, Budweiser, Master Lock, Coca Cola, Fords, and smart phones. Many people enjoy the ads more than the game. I wonder if there will be any ads that will encourage people to read the Bible and learn about salvation through, Jesus.

The Christian Church doesn't have to advertise at the Super Bowl. My life and your lives are God's advertisements about our love for God and that love is on display for the world to see. God uses Christians to get the message of Jesus out into the world.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The time we have on this earth is given to us to help others hear of God's plan of salvation. This is a great privilege as well as a great challenge.

My granddaughter, Brandi, has two small children. When Brandi needs a break, she calls Nancy to watch one or both of the children. Brandi would agree that Nancy is the salt of the earth. That's another way of saying, "Grandma is great, she is so helpful."

Jesus says that we are the salt of the earth, not because what we do is so great. We are the salt of the earth because Jesus uses us to speak to people and the Holy Spirit points them to their Savior.

In the ancient world there were no refrigerators to keep meat from spoiling. But they did have salt. Some of us may remember our grandparents curing bacon and ham by putting them into containers filled with salty brine. The bacon and ham would then be smoked with apple wood for awhile. That meat would be hung in a cool basement without the need of refrigeration.

What happens to meat if it is left out on a counter? It will spoil, won't it? The same is true of people: If people do not come into contact with Jesus as their Savior, they will "spoil" and perish. It's really simple: with Jesus people have life; without Jesus people will rot in hell.

You and I are the salt of the earth. We have the privilege of telling people what Jesus did to remove the problem of sin. What do we use? The Word of God!

But, what if we lose our saltiness? If that happens, Jesus said, It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. If we lose our saltiness, we lose our value. I don't want to lose my purpose on earth, I don't want to stop talking about the Savior! If the Lord leaves us on earth instead of taking us to heaven, He still has work for us to do. He wants us to be "salt" so people will learn of Jesus.

Satan likes to tell us that we are worthless salt. Satan says, "How can you be the salt of the earth, you are so evil! You Christians, no one cares about you." But Jesus cares for us and says that we are the salt of the earth. That means that we are a nobody, telling everybody about somebody who can save anybody.

Not only are we the salt of the earth, we are also the light of the world. People don't turn a light on and then cover the light so they are in darkness! Jesus says, Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

What do you do with a lamp? You put it where it can shine with the most light! Christians are to shine forth whenever we can, wherever we can, with the light of our Savior.

- Jesus was born to be our Savior.
- Jesus, died to pay for our sins.
- Jesus rose from the dead with the promise of life.
- Jesus ascended into heaven to put us into positions in life where we can shine forth for our heavenly Father.

There is a children's song that helps us appreciate what we can

do. (This Little Light of Mine) Mrs. Steinberg

Think of all the people who will watch the Super Bowl next week. How many of those people are living in darkness of sin? Too many! John wrote, The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

It is a privilege to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It is also a challenge. Jesus said, Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy them but to fulfill them. God's laws don't change. God's Law demands perfection. It demands that we love God with all our heart, all our mind, and with all our strength. It demands that we love human beings as much as we love ourselves.

Jesus did not come to lower the standards for eternal life. He came to fulfill the Law which we can not do. The only way to heaven is still only through Jesus Christ.

Most of the people in the world try to be right with God by living a good life. They think, "I've been really bad; I will try to be very good. That will equal things out. God will like me if I try to do good!" That thinking is all wrong! Listen to what God says: There is no one who does what is good; not even one!

Scripture is God's truth. Any contradiction of God's Word is a serious matter. Anyone who deliberately contradicts Scripture is not a Christian. If I would teach someone accidentally that they can be saved by being good, I would give them false hope. I would be guilty of changing God's Word. I would not be salt or light. I would be in heaven because I know Jesus as my Savior, but Jesus says that I would be the least in the kingdom of God. It's important to study God's Word to know the truth.

The Bible teaches that we aren't good enough to make God love us, forgive us, or take us to heaven. The Bible says that we are sinless before God only through faith in Jesus. Jesus lived a holy life for us and we get the credit for Jesus' work! The Law and the

Prophets is a term for the Old Testament books: Genesis to Malachi. In the OT there was one basic message: all people are sinful and deserve God's punishment; but God would send a Savior! In the OT people believed in the coming Savior and received God's forgiveness. In the NT people believe the Savior has come and we have forgiveness.

There is a painting called the "Rock of Ages." It shows a woman clinging to a cross on a rock in the middle of raging water. She is holding onto the cross with one hand while holding out her other hand to help someone who is drowning. Friends, remember - Jesus wants us to be salt and light wherever we are and in whatever circumstances we might be – to tell people about Jesus!

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