

Good Morning

Today's gospel lectionary reading focuses on light and salt. It explains how we are to live out lives out in the world. Not the way we are gathered here in at this moment. We are encouraged to take the light, out there, into the world. At school. At work. In our neighborhood. In our circle of friends. Out there in the world - which is often dark. My home growing up was near The Church of the Open Bible. On top of the church steeple was red neon cross that was light up every night – every night, no matter what, even through a thunderstorm. My bedroom window faced the neon cross. And at night, as I laid in my bed, I would gaze out at the cross. For me, the light from the cross symbolized hope in the darkness. Our lives are like that neon cross guiding other lives through darkness.

Jesus says YOU are the light of the world.

Jesus did not say, “You are to be the light for the church.” The Bible does not say, “When you come to church, turn on your light. When you come to the church, let everyone see how holy and moral you are. When you come to the church, turn on your spiritual energy.”

NO. When you leave this church and get in your car and drive out of the parking lot and into your neighborhoods, into your schools, into your classrooms, into your factories and offices, let your light shine.

YOU are the light of the world.

Let the world see your light and come to know Jesus Christ.

Today's gospel reading also says, out there in the world, YOU are the salt of the earth.

My mother was an extraordinary cook. Her food was, in a word, amazing. No one could

cook like my mother. What was it that made her food so full of flavor? What was her secret ingredient? It was salt!

Funny story, The doctor told my mother to remove salt from my father's diet. To insure that he didn't salt his food she place a small piece of foil inside the lid of the shaker. So no matter how hard he would try to add salt to his meal no salt would come out.

One day he told my mother that she forgot how to cook. Flavor was missing from her meals. Salt that magic ingredient that my father loved about her cooking

I brought some salt with me this morning. (Show the salt.) I like a little salt on my popcorn. Without salt, popcorn just doesn't taste as good. It's bland.

What other uses are there for salt? Just this past week we put salt on our sidewalks to keep us from slipping.

We put salt in water softeners to soften our water.

At Thanksgiving some people use salt to brine their turkeys to make them tender and full of flavor.

Jesus says YOU are the salt of the earth.

In ancient times, salt was very important. People back then did not have refrigerators so salt was used to preserve food. It kept food from spoiling, or tasting bad.

They would preserve fish; that is, they would salt it and dry it out.

Salt was also a symbol of the preservation of life. If you don't have salt, all you have is decay. It is very important to understand that. You have to have salt to preserve life.

And Jesus said, you are the salt of the earth. YOU

In Jesus life time, it was said that a man's life was as valuable as a bag of salt. Salt was

prized by the Hebrews. It became an important article of trade and was transported by boat across the Mediterranean Sea, along specially built SALT roads, and across the Sahara in camel caravans. It's scarcity and universal need led nations to go to war over salt.

When Jesus said that we are the salt of the earth, he meant that being a Christian gives flavor to our lives. So, without salt in our food, our food might become dull tasting. It wouldn't have flavor. Without Jesus in our life, our life might become dull and meaningless. Our life wouldn't have flavor.

The salt that has "lost its saltiness" or becomes bland may refer to A type of SALT common in the Dead Sea area that is contaminated with gypsum and other minerals. It has a flat taste and is useless as a preservative. Such mineral salts were useful for little more than keeping paths free of vegetation. That may be why Jesus said that it is good for nothing but to be "trampled underfoot."

If the salt has lost its saltiness, what use is it to anyone. You might as well throw it in the garbage.

Except – You are the salt of the earth.

Since Jesus is in our life, our life is exciting. When we show others that Jesus gives OUR life flavor THEN people who don't know Jesus, as we do, will want to know about him too.

The next time you pick up that salt shaker be reminded that YOU are ALL the salt of the earth. Show other people that you have flavor in your life. That flavor is because you know Jesus.

Amen.