

Pastor Roy's sermon from February 5, 2017

Jesus says "You are the salt of the earth." As Jesus suggests, if salt loses its saltiness, it is no longer salt, but something to fill potholes. There is salt, and then there is gravel. You are salt.

"You are the salt of the earth." What does that mean? Salt gives flavor. Salt arouses thirst. Salt irritates. Salt is a preservative. Salt keeps the roads from icing over. We overhear Jesus telling his disciples, "You are the salt of the earth." How am I salt? How are you salt?

Jesus also says, "You are light." And your light will shine. When light shines in darkness, then darkness is filled with light. Light cannot be made dark, as long as the light stays lit.

Salt and light. Salt and light enhance the other. Mashed potatoes. Oatmeal. Bread. Yes, pretzels. The focus is not on the salt, the focus is on what the salt enhances. Light allows us to see. It does not instantly create anything, it simply reveals what is there. Salt enhances. Light reveals.

So Jesus says, we are salt. We are light. Perhaps he is saying we enhance. We reveal what is.

He then tells us that we are teachers. In our salty light, we help others. You do as you are and so your presence brings hope, inspiration, and peace. Thirst. Curiosity.

These are the tools of our witness to life. We are tools in God's hand. As is all of creation. We cannot opt out of this calling. We are salty light teachers. But what do we teach? For some 3000 years our message has been much the same. Isaiah nails it in the passage today. This is what we and our greater tradition are all about. He speaks of it in terms of a fast, a prayer, listening to God as we ask, "What is my purpose, what shall I do, who am I? Isaiah speaks for God, as do the prophets, and Jesus, and the Saints:

Is not this the fast that I choose: To lose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to let break every yoke of bondage? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house: when you see the naked to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

Jesus does not say, You can be salt and light, or you should be salt and light—no. He says, "You are salt. You are light: Go teach as you are gifted and able." You are gifted and you are able. No one can do what you can do. Not like you do it, not for whom you do it. So, enhance your world, reveal love, compassion, justice. This is our calling--we can, and by grace we will. Thanks be to God. Amen.