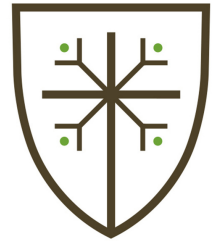


Epiphany on the Mount

Sermon Series for the Season of Epiphany



SERMON NOTES



January 15, 2023

SERMON INFO

TITLE

Salt, Light, and Anger

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Isaiah 49:1-6

1 Corinthians 1:4-9

Matthew 5:13-16, 21-26

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do you see yourself functioning as salt of the earth in your life? At work? In relationships? As a church body?
2. How does anger stand in the way of the call to be salt and light?
3. As those who still live under the influences of entropy and decay, what can we do in order to "remain salty" in this world as Christians?

Tim began our 6-week sermon series on the sermon on the mount from Matthew. Contrary to how it is often treated, the sermon on the mount is not a rulebook. It does not teach a Gospel of rule keeping to earn God's love. It is about morality, but not our morality. Rather, it shows us who God is that we would know him and love him more fully. The Gospel it preaches is one of a God who loves you and has done everything necessary to bring you salvation and fullness of life. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus utilizes a number of metaphors. In our passage this week, he uses salt and light to speak about anger.

Beginning Metaphors

Salt has two main functions that both serve as metaphors for the Christian. First, it is used to season. Salt is not meant to stand alone. It is used to bring out the flavors in a dish to make it taste better. The Christian is called to bring out that which is good and beautiful in this world that it might "taste better." The second function of salt is that of preservative. Salt is used to preserve cut meat, to prevent the growth of bacteria and mold and decay in the meat. Entropy - the physical decay, disorder and breakdown seen in the world - is a sign of the decay that is at work in the soul, the spiritual decay in every individual. Without attention, our life in relationship with other people and with God quickly decays. Christians are called to be the salt that preserves that life.

Light, similar to salt, makes things more beautiful. Also similar to salt, light is not meant to stand alone. Light is that by which you see everything else. That is why the Christian is told to "let your light shine that others may see God."

Initial Obstacle

The initial obstacle to being salt and light is anger. The anger spoken of in Matthew is not a temporary burst of anger. It is something that is indulged or nursed - "everyone who is angry." Elsewhere in scripture Jesus speaks of a righteous anger, anger at injustice perpetrated against someone else, anger that seeks to protect others, preserve life and shed light. But often our anger is not this variety. It is too often Matthew's variety in which it is born from a desire to injure someone else in order to satisfy our own desires. In order to answer God's call on our lives, we must become something more and something other than angry.

The Essential Turn

Finally, in order to overcome this obstacle, we must turn from the high calling laid upon us to the lowly service Jesus has done for us. Jesus never asks us to do anything or be anything that he himself has not already done or been. Jesus was the salt and light that we could never be on our own. Yet he endured and died on the cross for our abject failure to be salt and to be light. We receive his life of salt and light in our hearts and we are changed into people who flavor the world with goodness.