

Let Your Light So Shine (The politics of Jesus)

Matthew 5: 1-16

#2 in our series "Stories Jesus Told"

Peter Hiett

May 10, 2015

Prayer

And so Lord, shine on in, bring these dead bones to life. Father I love that song and I love to hear Jess sing it. It's our prayer. Help us to preach in Jesus name, amen.

Message

Matthew 5: 13 *"You are the salt of the earth."*

Verse 14: *"You are the light of the world."*

Matthew 5: 15 *"People don't light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand."*

Matthew 5: 16 *"Let your light so shine before men."*

We are to be the light of the world, so we obviously need to get our act together!

To Be Salt and Light We Must:

1. Be rich in spirit!
2. Display our joy!
3. Claim our rights!
4. State that we are right!
5. Stop tolerating sinners!
6. Be the best in everything we do!
7. Win the culture war!
8. Become the moral majority!
9. Demand respect!

1. We need Spirit!

In High School we always had a spirit section at sporting events. We'd chant, "We got spirit, yes we do! We got spirit, how 'bout you?" It psyched us up. Sometimes Christians walk around like they're in mourning.

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- "Blessed are the poor in spirit ...of them is the kingdom."*

2. We need to Display our Joy. And we need to display our courage. Let's stop being so meek!

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3. We need to claim our rights and

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4. We need to clearly state that we are right. We have the answer.

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5. We need to stop tolerating sinners. The Bible is clear: some things are just wrong!

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6. We need to be relevant. We should be the best musicians, the best businessmen, but athletes, - "the light of the world."

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7. We must win the culture war.

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8. We must become the moral majority. If we're not vigilant, - before you know it, we could be the persecuted minority rather than the moral majority.

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9. We must demand respect. Muslims bomb buildings when Mohammed is disrespected. Why don't we bomb buildings when Jesus is disrespected? Like, when people draw pictures of Jesus, dis-respected and reviled, naked, weak, spit on, abused and placed on a stand for all to see? If we're to be "the salt of the earth" and "light of the world," hadn't we better get our act together – church?

That's why I'm introducing:

Peter's Plan for *Maximum Engagement*:

- ***M*arketing**
- ***M*anagement**
- ***E*xpertise**

Peter's Plan For Maximum Engagement.

We need better marketing. Instead of "God is better than you thought," how about "The Sanctuary is better than the church you now attend?" We need better management.

So I've taken (holdig up a handful of books)

Ken Callahan's, *12 Keys to an Effective Church*,
Mark Mittelburg's , *6 Steps of Building a Contagious Church*,
Rick Warren's, *5 Points of the Purpose Driven Church*,
And Bill Hull's, *4 Principles of the Disciple Making Pastor*,

[Peter drops books on floor] and combined them all into "The Dynamic Salt and Light Strategy for Global Conquest, 27 Key Disciple-making Principles for Building the Contagious Purpose Driven Church." I will train ten key leaders, who will master the 27 principles and then train 10 more in return. (Do the Math.) $10 \times 10 = 100$; $100 \times 10 = 1,000$; $1000 \times 10 = 10,000$ etc., etc.

Through this Dynamic Exponential Disciple Making Strategy, in ten years we make ten billion disciples, that's the world. That's global conquest. We can do this because I'm an expert! I have a Master of Divinity Degree.

Peter's Plan for Maximum Engagement, M. M. E. – Mmmee!

Now, let's back up everything I just said with Scripture.

Matthew 5: 13

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

"You are the salt of the earth." It's interesting that Jesus didn't say, "You *should* be the salt of the earth," or "try to be salty." However, he does ask, "What if salt has lost its taste?" Well, if salt has lost its taste, it's not salt. So, if you lose your taste, maybe you are no longer you, but a false you—an imitation you—an act. And it's worth asking, "Who's doing the tasting?" Every Jew knew that all the sacrifices were seasoned with salt. They knew God was doing the tasting.

Romans 12: 2

"Present your bodies as a living sacrifice."

Tasty. There is something God can't taste and God doesn't know: an act, or a lie, or a false self, a religious self. Well, Jesus says, "**You *are* the salt of the earth.**" "*But if that salt has lost its taste . . .*" Most Jews got their salt from the banks of the Dead Sea and that salt often contained impurities. If the salt leached out, you were left with dirt, that is clay, or earth. Adam was made of clay and something else.

Well, anyway, they would keep the salt in an "*earthen vessel.*" And Scripture says we each have an "*earthen vessel.*" The point isn't to keep the salt forever in that "*earthen vessel.*" You shake the salt out of the saltshaker – that's the point.

Well, you think you are the "*earthen vessel,*" but Jesus says, you are the salt. Jesus says, "*You are the salt of the earth.*" Then verse 14,¹

Matthew 5: 14

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In

¹ "*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden . . .*" When Jesus said this, they could look across the Sea of Gallilee and see Tiberius, the city built by Caesar Tiberius on top of a hill so everyone could see how Romans live. God also builds a city and sets it on a hill. There's a city built by men that bears its name and there's a city built by God that will take its place, the New Jerusalem, City of Peace.

the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Now that raises a host of questions!

Jesus doesn't say, "You *should be*, *could be*, or *might be* the light – but "you **are** the light." So if you try to be the light, maybe that you isn't light and isn't really you, like if you try to be salty, you've lost your flavor and don't know who you are. Jesus says, "You **are** the light of the world." Yet, we all know, Jesus is the "Light of the world." (John 8: 12) "*The light*" - one light. So maybe we're the light like a lamp is a light. The lamp is a container that radiates light. So we're like earthen vessels containing light and radiating light through the cracks and holes in our vessel.

[Image of a clay oil lamp]

This is an oil lamp from Jesus' day.

It was an earthen vessel containing oil. It was lit and placed on a stand for all to see and all to see *by*. Jesus doesn't say, "*TRY* to shine your light," but, "*LET your light shine.*" To "let" something happen means stop trying to make it happen or not happen. – Instead, get out of the way so it will happen. "*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father.*" Not to you, but to your Father. "Let it shine so men can see your good works."

In the next chapter, (Matthew 6: 1) Jesus says, "Don't practice righteousness to be seen by men." So let it shine so men can see, but don't let it shine in order to be seen by men! "*Your right hand shouldn't even know what your left hand is doing.*" That is, shining light may have a purpose, but it's not *your* purpose. So it can't be for you, a strategy (a means to some other end).

"*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your Kalos ergon, (your beautiful works) and give glory to your father in heaven.*" What works are those? When Christian experts market manage and engage culture with political power, do people "give glory to God for those beautiful works?"

I think abortion is a profound tragedy for mothers, children and society. I think Scripture commands us to treat foreigners as our own citizens, but when Christians march on Washington demanding "rights" whether they be for undocumented aliens or unborn children; when we march from the left or right, demanding rights, do the people of the world give glory to God the Father for our beautiful works?

Maybe sometimes. But is it groups demanding rights, or more like one person surrendering rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, emptying self and taking the form of a slave? Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not saying it's bad to march and we live in a democratic republic so you should all vote, debate and legislate. But is that the beautiful work Jesus was talking about? Jesus says, "Let them see your good – beautiful works" not that you might do, could do, or will do, but already do.

Well, who are these people that Jesus is talking to? Let's back up and read this in context:

Matthew 4: 25

And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

“Beyond the Jordan” is beyond Israel. And the Decapolis refers to ten Greek cities on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. And now they’re in Galilee – populated with fishermen and peasants.

These people are the *normal, unremarkable* people of the world.

Matthew 5: 1

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

“*His Disciples*” does not refer to the twelve. At this point, Jesus hasn’t even picked all twelve disciples. And Matthew 7: 28 still refers to these “disciples” as “the crowds.” Disciple means “follower.” These are people that literally followed Jesus up this hillside.



(I took this picture.) (Most think it was this hillside – hardly an impressive climb.) Nobody told them they had to do it. Jesus didn’t say, “If you ascend the mountain, I will make you the light of the world.” No, they were just interested enough in Jesus, to follow him up this hillside, sit down, and listen to what He had to say.

Matthew 5: 2-14

*And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs **is** the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they **shall** be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they **shall** inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they **shall** be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they **shall** receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they **shall** see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they **shall** be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs **is** the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. **You** are the salt of the earth. **You** – poor in spirit, meek and mourning, hungering for righteousness – **you** are the light of the world.”*

Wow! Jesus sure knows how to mess up a good sermon.

Years ago, at Penn State, a young Jewish grad student converted to Christianity. One of his professors encouraged him to go to a well-known Evangelical church. Later the professor, my friend Tony Campolo, asked him how it was going. The young man responded, "You know, if you put together a committee and asked them to take the Beatitudes and create a religion that contradicted every one of them, you'd come pretty close to what I'm hearing down at that church. . . ."

Jesus says,

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7. Win the culture war!
8. Become the moral majority!
9. Demand respect!

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," literally, *"of them consists the kingdom."* As if the Kingdom was a city on a hill made of living stones, poor in spirit, or that at least had been poor in spirit. Now, I suppose you could argue that they become *"the light of the world"* after they receive the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, but Jesus doesn't say that.

Well, if you're *"poor in spirit,"* maybe you'd like to be filled with the Spirit? And that's the work of the Holy Spirit.

And . . .

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"Blessed (it means happy) are those who mourn."

Recently, one of you wrote this and sent it to me:

I have recently realized . . . that despite my choleric demeanor I am not really an angry person. I am a sad person . . . upon this realization, I felt waves of relief flow over me because I know my truest self is not angry and bitter – that's just another mask – the truest, deepest part of me that Jesus knows intimately is just sad and HE was a man of SORROWS and acquainted with GRIEF. I literally feel Him entering into my sadness and helping me bear it – not take it away because it is my place of weakness . . . and where I am weak HE is strong.

When I read that, it just made me happy. It's like sorrow and joy are not opposites – more like sorrow is a container for joy. So "Blessed are those who mourn" the emptiness of this world . . . for they long to be filled and will rejoice when they are filled and they see the whole world filled with God.

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"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Someone said, "They better inherit it, cause that's the only way they're gonna get it!" Well, maybe that's the only way you can get it.²

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"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness . . ." If you hunger and thirst for righteousness, it must mean that you're not right, but want to be right. You hunger and thirst for it . . . as if you could eat it, like broken bread, and drink it, like red wine.

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"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." You can't receive mercy if you think you don't need mercy or won't confess that you're a sinner. Mercy doesn't tolerate sin; it destroys sin, for it loves sinners.

² Earth is "eretz," which also means land or Israel. You can't take it; you can only receive it.

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"Blessed are the pure in heart." Kierkegaard wrote, "Purity of heart is to will one thing."
"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Why? Because God is the one thing they will and want to see, so wherever they look, they look for God.

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"Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." That's the verse Karl preached on last week.

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"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake." Literally translated, *"OF them consists the kingdom of God."* We're so worried about protecting the Kingdom from persecution, when the Kingdom is constructed with the persecuted. Trying to save the Kingdom, we prevent the Kingdom. That's diabolical . . . so, *"Get behind me Satan."* *"Blessed are the persecuted and reviled."*

We love experts because they're very rarely reviled. The people on that hillside weren't experts and they couldn't rely on experts.

And you know, the people on that hillside weren't management gurus. They actually had no organizational structure. Jesus appointed twelve, but as far as we know, none of them duplicated the system.

And you know, none of them were very good at marketing. - Probably most of them were illiterate and none of them had access to the "movers and shakers" of their day.

We, however, live in a market society, with a management economy, run by experts.

- The experts are paid to do what they do . . . they're mercenaries.
- Hundreds of companies sell basically the same product . . . so the product is not the point, but how well you manage; the institution becomes the point.
- And in a competitive market driven commercial economy, everyone experiences what sociologists call, a "depletion of meaning."

In other words, we're bombarded with messages like this:

- "Coke is the real thing." So "real thing" doesn't mean much anymore.
- "Volvo can save your soul." So "salvation" doesn't mean much anymore.
- "Love is endless" . . . like McDonalds.

So, when an expert like me, in a well-managed environment, says, "God is Love. Jesus is Salvation. The REAL THING." Well, it just doesn't mean so much . . . anymore . . . so who could say the same thing, such that folks would get the meaning?

Jesus continues: (Matthew 5: 12-13)

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"Blessed are you when reviled..."

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

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"Blessed are you when reviled..."
- "You are the salt of the earth...
You are the light of the world" - Jesus*

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste"

– no longer poor in spirit, mourning, meek, hungry for righteousness, merciful, sacrificial, persecuted and reviled –

"how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet."

Matthew 5: 14-16

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Jesus says, “*YOU are the salt of the earth . . . YOU are the Light of the World . . .*” And then He refers to God as their “*Father in Heaven.*”

In a few minutes, He'll say, “When you pray, say, ‘*Our Father.*’” It's like they've already passed through judgment. I mean, these people sound pretty saved . . . and yet, check this out:

Not one of them even knows what we would call “the Plan of Salvation.”

Not one of them has prayed what we would call “the Sinner's Prayer.”

Not one of them is what we would call a “Christian.”

Not one of them yet knows, “He is the Christ.”

It's still two years until Peter says, “*You're the Christ the Son of the Living God.*”

So, what do these people have going for them that others do not? Why are they the LIGHT OF THE WORLD? All we know about them is that they like Jesus...period. They like him. And it may not even be a whole lot of “like.” It may only be the size of a mustard seed. They just like him enough to drop what they're doing, walk up a hillside, sit down, look at him and listen. The “liking” may only be the size of a mustard seed, but Jesus seems to think it will grow.

They like him.

Gandhi was a Hindu who almost became a Christian, but He was kicked out of a church service because of the color of his skin (brown, like that of Jesus.) He wrote, “I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians, they are so unlike your Christ.” In an interview, Albert Einstein once said, “I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous (light emitting) figure of the Nazarene.”

I wonder if Albert Einstein and Mahatma Gandhi were sitting on that hillside?

Are you sitting on that hillside? I bet you are.

I hope you didn't come here just to get your butt out of hell and into heaven.

I hope you came here just because you like Jesus.

John 3: 19, Jesus says,

“This is the judgment: the Light has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light . . . but whoever does what is true, comes to the light so it can be clearly seen that his deeds have been done by God.”

God is Light and Jesus is the Light of the World.

The people on the hillside came to the Light.

The people on the hillside couldn't make *themselves* the Light.

They themselves were a deed done by the Light.

They simply liked the Light and so looked at the Light, and the Light was reflected in their eyes.

That Light judges, heals, and makes all things new.

When you look at people and see Jesus, (for he said, whatever you do to the “*least of these*” my brothers, you do to me), the Light reflected in your eyes judges people and tells them who they truly are. When you look at your enemies and see Jesus, the kindness in your eyes burns evil and begins to set those people free.

I say this not as a nice poetic thought, but from practical experience gained by praying for people with demons. And yet, it's true all the time, and in every situation, you, your old self cannot judge people, save people, and make them new. But the Light in your eyes CAN and DOES . . . when you look at people and see Jesus.

In Luke 11, Jesus says,

"Your eye is the lamp of your body. When it's single, your whole body will be full of light"

- A Lighthouse. The pure in heart want to see one single thing. They want to see God and they DO see God, even in "the last and the least of these." They are the Light of the world.

So, what do the people on the hillside have going for them that others do not?
They like Jesus.

So Jesus says, *"You are the salt of the earth," "You're the light of the world," My Father is your Father.*" And when I remember that God is a Father it all starts to make sense. Things that made no sense to others made perfect sense and meant everything to me as a new father. This amazing event happened with each of my children, and I remember the first time in particular.

I was holding my baby on the couch feeding him (cheerios or something). It was super gross-soggy cheerios, spit and a world of culinary imperfection. He was gumming away, when he stopped and looked at me, took a chewed up, soggy, slobbery cheerio out of his own mouth and put it in my mouth and smiled. I could barely contain my joy – because all at once I realized, "My son sees me and likes me, not a thing, a provider, a creator – He sees me, and He likes me. He really likes me!!" This is silly, but I felt like this and maybe Jesus felt like this:

Clip of Sally Fields' academy award acceptance speech

Sally Fields: *But I want to say thank you to you. I haven't had an orthodox career, and I wanted more than anything to have your respect. The first time, I didn't feel it. But this time I feel it! And I can't deny the fact, that you like me! Right now! You LIKE me!* (Sally Fields smiles hugely, joyfully.)

[Loud applause and the camera pans over smiling faces]

Sally Fields: *Thank you.* (She laughingly bows her head.)

Your Father in heaven really, really, really likes you, and it thrills him that you would like him too...not use him, manipulate him or, even obey him, but that you would like him.

I think Jesus looked out at those uncouth, slobbering, soggy peasants on the hillside and thought,

"You like me, you like me, you came to me, you like me!"
I am the Word of the Father spoken into the void to create you.
I am the way, the truth and the life.
I am God in flesh and love poured out and you like me.
"You see me and you like me." "You have loved my appearing."

In 2 Timothy 4, Saint Paul, who had been Rabbi Saul, the Pharisee, sits in a prison cell waiting to die. He's poor in spirit, meek, mourning, and hungering for righteousness. Paul writes,

"I'm being poured out like a drink offering and the time of my departure has come . . . henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day as he will all who have loved his appearing."

You see? The Judgment is simply his appearing—the Light having come into the world. The peasants on the hillside loved, *"his appearing."* The Sadducees and Pharisees, the ruling liberal elite – and the popular conservative religious leaders – the religious politicians – did not. They did not like that Jesus loved their enemies. They wanted him to torment their enemies.

Sometimes I wonder if we Christians have "loved our Lord's appearing," for it seems, we don't want him to appear the same way, and second time. The first time, He forgave his enemies and died for those that persecuted and reviled him. The second time some want him to torture his enemies and never, ever, ever, ever, ever, forgive them or save them. I struggle to know how to say this, so I may not be saying it right, but I think the biggest disappointment in my life has been the realization that many, many Christians – sort of maybe just don't like Jesus (hardly at all) and sometimes – I'm one of them.

You may say, "Well, if Christians don't like Jesus, what do they like?" "If they don't like *Yehoshua*, *"God is Salvation,"* what do they like? "If they don't like absolute, unending mercy and grace, what do they like? Why would they go to the "church?" "If they don't like the Light, what do they like? Well, maybe they like the earthen vessel that is the work of their own hands, not Grace, for which God gets the glory, but their own works for which they get the glory; not the *Ye-ho-shua*, *"God is Salvation,"* but "I am salvation;" not the light, but the vessel. M. M.M.E. – Me;

My Marketing Management and Expertise;
MY ability to take knowledge from the tree and make myself in the image of God;
MY ability to build the temple, the city and take the Lord.

You know, they crucified Jesus because they perceived him to be a threat to their earthen vessel: that is, the stone temple *they* built, in the city *they* built, in the land *they* claimed as their own. They perceived him to be a threat and he *was*, but not in the way they expected. He destroyed the temple with love poured out and he filled a new one on Pentecost with Holy Fire: People – poor in spirit were flooded with his Spirit and the New Jerusalem began to come down – not a church built by MME, but a living body constructed by God with people that just really, really liked Jesus—"Worshippers" is what those people are called!!

So listen, nothing's wrong with marketing, management and expertise. In some form, they're each a gift of the Spirit. The problem is that we confuse them *with* the Spirit. We confuse the container with the Light. Nothing's wrong with a stone temple until we confuse the earthen vessel with the Glory. Maybe nothing's wrong with your flesh until you think it can save you. Nothing's wrong with the law until we confuse it with Love – God is Love and God is light. Jesus says, *"Let your light so shine."* ³

"Let your light so shine."

How do we NOT let it shine?

Maybe by trying to make ourselves salty when we already are the salt

Maybe by trying to be the light when we just have to look at the light and let it shine

³ You know, Jesus acts as if we all have some light. John writes that Jesus is *"the light that enlightens all men."*

Maybe by confusing the things we can do with the things God *does do*
Maybe by confusing our earthen vessel with the light.
So, we don't shine the light – we display our earthen vessel.
People see our Marketing, but don't see any meaning.
People see our Management, but don't see any life.
People see our Expertise, but not the Savior.
Listen: You can build huge programs, buildings, religions, cities, and nations that way...
But not the Church of Jesus Christ.

To testify to the Savior you must testify that you (your old self) are not the Savior, not the life, and not the meaning. To testify to the light, such that men would “*see your good works*” and give glory to God and not you . . . your earthen vessel must be broken.

We asked, “What *kalos ergon*, what kind of “*good work*,” or “*beautiful deed*” was Jesus referring to on the hillside that day?” I think it's hugely significant that there is only one “*kalos ergon*” recorded in Matthew's gospel and indeed in all of the gospels, and in all of the gospels in some form, it's recorded.

In Matthew 26, just days before Jesus is crucified, a woman takes an alabaster flask of pure nard—worth a year's wage (that's an earthen vessel filled with priceless oil), and she does something highly inappropriate and uncouth—she breaks the earthen vessel and pours the oil on Jesus' head and, according to John, wipes his feet with her hair.

She's poor in Spirit – she's mourning.
She's meek, she's hungry and thirsty for righteousness.
She's Merciful and pure in heart.
She's a peacemaker and will be persecuted and reviled.
She's salty and she's the Light of the world.

Jesus says, “Wherever the gospel is preached, this story will be told.” “She has done a ‘*Kalos Ergon*.’”

She is seen by men, but doesn't do it to be seen by men.
She herself is a broken vessel.
She's lost herself and found herself swept away in a river of light.
And she really, really, really likes Jesus,
And Jesus has always really, really, really liked her.
She's the bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem, the City set on the hill – the church.

Judas, the consummate religious politician says, “Why the waste? This oil might have been sold and the money given to the poor.” And it could have been. You can build quite a lot that way: programs, buildings, institutions, but not the New Creation . . . Well, I'm an expert that manages an institution and markets a ministry. Sometimes I do a bad job – (with other's help) sometimes a good job.

But YOU are the salt of the earth. YOU are the light of the world. YOU are God's evangelism program. YOU are our missionaries. This institution is just a saltshaker, but you are the salt. You are to be spread around.

If you are here because you like Jesus, then just be yourself wherever you are, that is like Jesus, wherever you are. Don't try to be the light – the real you is the light – you didn't make you. You don't need to market, manage, or rely on experts. Don't try to be religious. Don't get an act together – don't be false. Just like the Light and you'll reflect the Light - sometimes with a smile, sometimes with a tear and sometimes with a word. You'll become a “*peace maker*.”

Last week Karl Wheeler quoted Matthew 5: 5 and talked about the lack of peace in Fergusson Missouri, and at Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, and in the City of Old Jerusalem, and in our hearts because most of us are somehow related to all those places.

So what does it mean to be a peacemaker? Well, politics matter and you can talk politics if you want, but talking politics is like arguing over the babysitter. Politics is all about legislation, and that means law. Galatians 5: 24, Paul writes that the law was our babysitter until Christ came. When the kids were little, I might've argued with Susan over which babysitter enforced the best rules. But, I knew that only our love poured out would shape our children's hearts.

Jesus lived in a highly charged political environment and He managed to infuriate every politician on the right and the left. When they tried to make him king, He ran away, as if to say, "If I were that kind of king, I couldn't be the salt of the earth and the light of the world." Politics is all about legislation – that's law. The Light is absolute Grace.

So what does Fergusson need? What does Pine Ridge need? What does Old Jerusalem need? What does your school, your job, and your home need? Answer: The salt of the earth and the light of the world – that is, YOU, the sacrificial presence of the Body of Christ.

You probably can't go to all of those places, but God may be calling you to one of those places. Let's say you go to Fergusson. You can't judge Fergusson, save Fergusson and redeem Fergusson. But – go there worshipping Jesus, and the light in your eyes can and will judge, save, and redeem.

Go there and look for Jesus in the eyes of insecure and frightened African American teenagers, and then look for Jesus in the eyes of insecure and frightened police officers. Let yourself be broken! And let light and love to spill out!

Go to Pine Ridge and wash some feet and you might make peace in your own anxious heart. Go to Bethlehem and love some terrified and angry Palestinians. Then, climb over the wall into Jerusalem and love some terrified and angry Zionists. Now, you may think, "How absurd!" "What good would that do?" If I did that, I might just get myself crucified!" Yes.

And then you'd see it: the New Jerusalem – (the city of Peace), adorned as a bride prepared for her Groom—the Prince of Peace and Light of the World.

Communion

On the night that Jesus was betrayed by Judas and all of us, He took bread and broke it saying, "*This is my body* (You know, He had an earthen vessel) *given to you. Take and eat; do this in remembrance of me.*" And in the same manner, He took the cup saying, "*This is the New Covenant in my blood. Spilled out—poured out for the forgiveness of sins.*"

HE is the light of the world and in the morning, he will be placed on a stand, called a cross – for the entire world to see and to see BY. He cried, "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*"

He was poor in Spirit.

He mourned and He was meek.

He hungered for *our* righteousness.

He cried, "*Father forgive them.*"

He was merciful.

"Into your hands I commend my spirit" – He was pure in heart.

“It is finished” – He is the peacemaker – called, “Son of God,”
He is the reason you’re here today at peace with God.
He was persecuted for the sake of your righteousness.
His earthen vessel was broken and love spilled out.
It’s how He makes all things new.
He’s not just the way to heaven. He is heaven.

So this is the judgment: Do you like him?

[Communion is served and several worship songs are sung.]

Benediction

I just saw you come forward to the Light. Even if you didn’t come forward, He still really, really likes you. And I know some of you personally. Some I don’t know, but I would say this, with everyone that I look at, that I see in this room, that I know, (This has also been my experience) - you like him. You like him!

Now, I know there’s a part of you that maybe doesn’t like him. That’s called sin. And there’s another part of you that does like him, and that’s called righteousness. It’s his righteousness growing in you. You like him.

And so listen closely: *“YOU are the salt of the earth. YOU are the light of the world.”* So at lunch today, if the person sitting next to you says, “God, I’m so damned depressed! I think God hates me.” Well, at that moment, something in you will want to try to judge them, save them, and redeem them. You can’t. But the light in your eyes can! And so, I don’t know exactly what that looks like for you, but I know it means testifying to the Light that you know. Maybe it’s turning to them at that point and just saying, “No, that’s not true! I know this: He likes you! I don’t know how to explain the dinosaurs on the ark; I don’t know who you should vote for, but He likes you!” Do you like him? Can you see that He likes you?

You’re the light of the world. *“Let your light so shine before men.”* In Jesus’ name, believe the Gospel, and you’ll become the gospel.

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don’t be shy about informing us of errors.