

Last week we discussed **Matthew 5:10-12**: “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Jerome (ca. 347-ca. 420) said “A storm puts a man on his guard, and obliges him to exert his utmost efforts to avoid shipwreck.” What is Jerome telling us?

Gene L. Davenport (1935-2018) said “To rejoice is to live in anticipation of deliverance as though deliverance already had taken place, as though the events toward whose culmination we look were already present.” What is he saying?

Oscar Romero (1917-1980) said “Those preachers who avoid every thorny subject so as not to bother anyone or cause conflict and difficulty shed no light on the reality in which they live.” What is Romero telling us?

Jeanne DeCelles (1933-2015) said regarding costs, “Whether we feel it or not may be a good litmus test for discerning if we are truly following on his path, or pursuing a false trail.” What is she telling us?

Matthew 5:13-16: “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.” What does this mean to you?

Salt - In common usage, salt is a mineral composed primarily of sodium chloride. When used in food, especially in granulated form, it is more formally called table salt. In the form of a natural crystalline mineral, salt is also known as rock salt or halite.

Gen. 19:26: “But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.” Her disobedient hesitation became proverbial in later generations (Luke 17:32). Even today, grotesque salt formations near the southern end of the Dead Sea are reminders of her folly.

Luke 17:32: Jesus says regarding his second coming – “Remember Lot’s wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.” Why is salt referred to in this manner? Why salt?

Nu 18:19: Regarding offerings - “Whatever is set aside from the holy offerings the Israelites present to the Lord I give to you and your sons and daughters as your regular share. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the Lord for both you and your offspring.” What does “covenant of salt” mean to you?

Col 4:6: Paul wrote-“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” Salt is a preservative and is tasty. Similarly, the Christian’s conversation is to be wholesome. What does this mean to you?

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

What does Jesus mean when he says we are the light of the world?

Charles E. Moore (1956 -) is a writer, teacher, and pastor in the Bruderhof community.

“His concern is not that his followers get more involved in the world, but that they don’t become like the world and lose their true identity. He wants his followers to remain true to who they are – to be what the world, on its own, cannot become.”

What is Moore telling us here about what Jesus is concerned about? What can’t the world become on its own?

Light “can be obscured by an opaque covering and lose the power to illuminate. This happens when we conform to the thinking and ways of this world and keep our religion in our pocket.” Have you ever been guilty of this?

Jane Tyson Clement (1917-2000) was an American poet and short story writer. She wrote in her poem “Resolve”:

“My sins are inward and refined, my friends the gentle friends of God; I must go seek the publicans, the wild companions of my Lord.” What is Clement telling us?

Publican - A publican is either a person who owns or manages a pub, particularly in British English, or an ancient Roman tax collector. Today, the term primarily refers to a pub owner or manager, while its historical meaning relates to a public contractor in ancient Rome who collected taxes and performed other public duties.

Do you or have you ever sought out those who may not be saved and thus become a light unto them?

John R. W. Stott (1921-2011) was an Anglican theologian and popular evangelical Bible expositor.

Stott discusses the relationship between us, (salt and light) and the world (death and darkness).

“The world is evidently a dark place, with little or no light of its own, since external sources of light is needed to illuminate it.” “The world also manifest a constant tendency to deteriorate.” “It cannot stop itself from going bad. Only salt introduced from outside can do this.” What is he telling us about the difference between the world and God? How are we included in the equation?

“The Christian must retain his Christlikeness, as salt must retain its saltiness...and allow the light of Christ within us to shine out from us, so that people may see it.”

Others must recognize that our works are His works and our light is His light so that they might experience our Father’s love and compassion and peace. Our salt represents eternal salvation and our light shines truth to the world. Go and be bold Christians.