

¹³“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. ¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

You are the light of the world.

You. Each and every one of you. Raise your hand up in the air.

You, with your hand up in the air, you are the light of the world.

Now I want you to know this is not my idea. I know a lot of you pretty well. I've seen some of you when you weren't exactly at your best. If I were doing the picking I don't think that all of you would make the light of the world list. And to tell you the truth, if you have been watching me very closely or even not so closely, you might think that I certainly do not belong on the light of the world list. Some of you may be convinced that I belong on the darkness of the world list.

But the picking is not up to me, nor up to you. Jesus speaks to us and this is what he says, "You are the light of the world." Now who am I or who are you to argue with him?

When we were baptized the light of the love of God was lit within us. This morning as Audrey is baptized we will symbolize the light of God's spirit within her with a lit candle. And the words of Jesus will be spoken to her, "Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

God plans on lighting up the world through her. Like a candle bringing its warm glow to a cold dark room, she will bring the love of God everywhere she is. You bring the love of God everywhere you go.

Or there is no light.

Only darkness. And God is disappointed.

You have seen it both ways in your life. The light in you gets covered over by hurt, or hate, or desire for revenge, getting even, giving what they deserve. The light in you gets starved by greed, everything for me, you become a black hole from which no light can escape.

But sometimes God has God's way, God's spirit rules your deed and light brings life and love. Generous and forgiving are you. Free, not chained but free. You listen, really listen to another's heart, forgetting your own for a moment.

God's spirit opens your hands and you share, the naked are clothed, the hungry are fed, the sick are visited, the homeless are sheltered.

You are light.

The light of the world.

And God gets all the credit.

We heard it last week, let the one who boasts boast of the Lord.

We hear it today: Let your light so shine before others that they will see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Maybe that is why God has chosen you and me. God knows that we know that we are not the best choices to be light, that we are weak. That we fail, that we disappoint ourselves and others. Maybe God has chosen us because when our light shines we will always know that light is from God. Christ shining through.

Christ is your light.

Let your light, Christ, so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.