

The Festival of St. Ambrose, Bishop, Confessor, and Doctor  
St. Matthew 5:13-19  
December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## Ye Are the Light of the World

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Scripture Text:**

<sup>14</sup> Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup> Neither do *men* light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. <sup>16</sup> Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Salt has been used as a preservative for centuries. Salt cures meats and vegetables so that they do not go bad; do not become rotten. Our Lord + Jesus in the Gospel pericope from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew tells us that we are the “salt of the earth.” What does this mean? It means that we are good for preserving this world from the rottenness of unbelief. How is this done? It is done through the Word of God; through the preaching of the Gospel. When sinners see their lost condition through the preaching of the Law, they are led to repentance by the work of the Holy Ghost. Through the preaching of the works and merits of the Christ—that is, the Gospel—they are given something outside of their works, something that covers over their sins, in which to trust.

This obviously begins in the Church. It is here where we hear the promise of salvation in the Lord + Jesus alone. It is here where we receive the forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation gifted to us in the means of grace. Here in this place, we are made salt. We are made into individuals who go into the world and share the faith with others. Just as we have been preserved from sin and damnation by the Word of God, we also lead others into the Church where they can be preserved from the rottenness of sin and death.

We are the salt of the earth, but our Lord + Jesus also adds a warning for us. We are not to lose our saltiness; our savor. This is a reference to those who have lost their faith. Now, this does not just mean those who become unbelievers; those who hate the Church, and become enemies of the Church. There are certainly those who have lost their saltiness to that point. But our Lord is also including those who allow the pleasures and cares of this world and life to so interfere with our reception of the Word of God, that we end up living our lives as if the Church does not matter. We may even still show up to the Services of the Church, but when we are away from this house of the Lord God, no one would be able to tell that we are Christians at all. If we are Christians only on Sundays, or in church, we have lost our saltiness, and are not worthy of being called Christian. For through the means of grace give to us

in the Church, we are kept and preserved in our saltiness. We are kept in the one, true faith.

Our Lord + Jesus also tells us that we are the Light of the world. Salt and light may not have anything to do with each other, but their meaning by our Lord is the same. Salt preserves us and all those upon whom we sprinkle the Gospel from the rottenness of sin, death, and the power of the devil. Light dispels the darkness of sin, death and the power of the devil from all those who are enlightened with the Word of the Lord God to cling in faith to the Lord + Jesus.

Light is meant to be shown; it is meant to dispel darkness. Again, the light in us is the Light of the Christ that is revealed to us through the Word of God. For the preaching of the Word of God reveals to us the Christ—our Lord + Jesus. When the faith that is in us is exposed to the world, it cannot be hidden. When we live our daily lives as Christians, this sinful and dark world cannot mistake us for anything but Christians. Just as the salt in us preserves ourselves and others from rottenness, the light that is in us enlightens the darkness that covers this world. This is why a city on a hill can be seen from miles around. For the light of that city shines in the darkness.

This city is the Church. The light that enlightens this world; that men can see from afar is the light of the Church proclaiming the good news of salvation in the Christ. For it is the Light of the world—the Christ—which the Church proclaims. The Light that is in us, is the Christ. We would have no light in us, if it were not for the Christ. We have no light in and of ourselves. Without the Christ, we would have no light at all. We would be just like this sinful and rebellious world which is trapped in darkness and sin and decay. Therefore, when our Lord + Jesus tells us to not hide our light under a bushel basket, He is telling us not to hide Him from ourselves and others in our lives.

We do this by placing before our eyes the cross of our Lord + Jesus. For He was crucified for us and for all mankind on a hill—the hill of Golgotha. It is the cross of our Lord + Jesus which enlightens us with the knowledge that our sins are forgiven on account of His actions. It is this cross of our Lord which we place before this sinful and dark world. For the crucifixion of our Lord fills us with the light of hope in the eternal reward of Heaven. For it is this sacrifice of our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ that truly glorifies the heavenly Father. The Lord tells us this is the reason for us to let our lights shine before men. It is not to bring glory to ourselves. It is not to make men congratulate us on how wonderful of a person we are. It is not so that we may earn the praise of men, but we let our light shine before other men, so that the heavenly Father may be glorified. He is glorified through the preaching of the Christ; through the preaching of His Only-Begotten Son.

For He is the Light of the world. From Him we gain our light. From Him we gain our saltiness; our savor. From Him and in Him we find saving faith. For in Him we find no other false god worthy of our thanks and praise. It is He that came to fulfill the Law. He promised that no jot or tittle would pass away until He had fulfilled all the prophecies of the Law and prophets. He fulfilled all that was required of the Law through His perfect obedience to the Law, and by His suffering and death on the tree of the holy cross. Therefore, no jot or tittle is lost. They do not fade or pass away. In fact, it is of no coincidence that our Lord's Name—+ Jesus—begins with a jot or tittle in both Greek and Hebrew. His Name in Hebrew begins with a yodh, and His Name in Greek begins with an iota. His Name does not pass away from those who are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. For by and through Him this world is preserved and enlightened to receive Him and enter into the eternal heavenly realms.

This is why we continue to call sinners to repentance through the Law, and absolve those who repent of their sins, and wish to amend their sinful lives, so that they may be preserved and enlightened from the rottenness and darkness of this world. This Sermon on the Mount was given to the Apostles first of all. They would sprinkle this earth with the salt of the Gospel, and they would enlighten this world with the Light of the Christ, through their preaching. They called sinners to repentance, and absolved those who wished to amend their sinful lives. They taught men that salvation was found in the Lord +

Jesus; that perfect keeping of the Law was not possible apart from the works and merits of the Christ.

This mantle of the Apostles was taken up by others who came after them. It has been taken up by us here in this place. We preach repentance towards the forgiveness of sins, just as the Apostles did. But we would not be able to do this if not for the faithfulness of those saints who came before us. Today we celebrate the Festival of St. Ambrose. He was a bishop of the Church in Milan, Italy. He was a Confessor and Doctor, meaning he publicly confessed the Christ that we learn about in the Creed, and he taught others to also confess the works and merits of the Christ. We know this is true for we have his writings preserved for us to read today.

We even have one of his hymns preserved for us to sing and praise the Lord God. He wrote the *Te Deum Laudamus*. We sang this hymn prior to the sermon, "Thee Lord, Our God, We Praise." St. Ambrose taught us to obey and honor the Lord God through this hymn. When we sing it together in the Church, we are continuing to teach others to obey and honor the Lord God. For through Him alone we have salvation. Through Him alone are we preserved from the rottenness of this earth. Through Him alone we are enlightened with the glorious good news of salvation in the Lord + Jesus' works and merits alone. In Him we have become a shining city on a hill. We have become the beacon of salvation to this lost and condemned world. We let our lights shine in this dark world, so that it may be enlightened and come to faith in the Lord + Jesus.

My dear friends, ye are the salt of the earth. Ye are the light of the world. We both preserve and enlighten this world by living every day as a Christian. We preserve this earth from rottenness by being an example of those who do not live rotten lives. We enlighten this world by not hiding our light under a bushel basket, but letting it shine in this dark world. Therefore, my dear friends, let us continue to preach the Christ, the Lord + Jesus, into this world, so that it may be preserved and enlightened just as we are, and even as St. Ambrose was. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*