

## **“We Are What We Need to Be”**

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What are you doing with your life? This is a question that we all ask ourselves at various times in our lives. It is the question behind children's dreams and stories about what they are going to be and what they are going to do when they grow up. Young people wrestle with this question as they plan for their future, choose colleges, choose careers, or create a new home for themselves. Adults look back, to the past, and wonder what they have done with their lives.

Difficulties, challenges, and losses often bring us face to face with this question. It's really a question of meaning, sense, and purpose. In this question, God draws us to himself. It is a question with which we will always struggle, until we begin to search for the meaning, meaning and purpose of what God, in the person of Jesus, has made known to us as the two great commandments: Love Him with all our heart, mind and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.

What are you doing with your life? is the question that is at the center of today's gospel. Jesus continues the Sermon on the Mount. He is talking to those people whom he has just declared blessed; the poor in spirit, those who cry, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for justice, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who are persecuted for justice's sake. Living the beatitudes is our way forward in this life and it is also our blessing.

You blessed, says Jesus, are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Our blessing, however, is not just for us alone. It is a gift given to us to be sustained and used for the life of the world. Because the Christian life is not lived in isolation from others or without consideration for them. If we do not savor this world with Christ, we are like salt that is no longer salty. If we do not illuminate the darkness with the presence of Christ, we are like the light hidden under a basket. We will have rejected our blessing. We are not living like the people who live and are part of the Jesus

movement, the movement that goes out into the world to help it be a world that lives the love that loves, liberates, and gives life.

Some of us listen to the words of Jesus and think that we need to be something that we are not or that we need to do something to obtain something that we do not already have. However, that is not what Jesus says. He does not say that we must become salt. He says that we are already salt. He does not say that we must be light. He says that we are already light. We are already what we need to be. We already have everything we need. Now we must go live the life of those who have been blessed, the life of being salt and the life of being light.

This is really a call to make our inner life and our outer life congruent, to be one. Our actions and our beliefs must reflect and reveal each other. Our faith in Jesus, our prayer life, our blessings must be made visible through how we live, speak and act. They must become the foundation of our relationships with all our family, friends, strangers, and enemies. It is one thing to believe in Christ and another thing to live a public life that demonstrates that belief.

We can say our prayers and sing our praises to God, but if prayer and praise do not govern and guide our actions in this world, they are just words that serve themselves and come deaf to God's ears. Maybe we should spend less time speaking the truth about God and more time making the truth of what God is real. What is that truth? How do we make that truth come true?

The prophet Isaiah is clear and concrete about how to make God's truth come true: by breaking the chains of injustice and untying the knots that tighten the yoke; leaving the oppressed free and ending all tyranny. We achieve this when we share our bread with the hungry, when we bring the homeless poor into our homes, and when we do not hide from one another, but rather meet the needs of the afflicted without speaking ill or condemning the other. In short, making God's truth real means doing what is right, what is divine. Live and care for each other in such a way that our blessing makes a difference in the lives of others.

When we live this way, our light breaks forth like the dawn of a new day, and the darkness disperses. That light is the presence and love of Christ. As we live for others, we discover that our souls have been healed, our needs met, our lives rebuilt, and God is always there saying, "Here I am."

The meaning, meaning and purpose of our lives are found in the life and well-being of the other person. That is what people experience who offer their time, talent and treasure so that we continue to do the good that we do from our churches. These people are distributing salt and light to many people whom they do not know.

The meaning, intent, and purpose of our lives lie in the life and well-being of the other person. Every time we offer forgiveness, seek reconciliation, or act compassionately, we sprinkle salt. Every time we speak a word of hope, work for justice, or do for someone else what we want them to do for us, our light pushes back the darkness.

Much of our world is dark and tasteless. Too many people live a meaningless existence, they live in the shadows. The world and its people need flavor. They need light. They need you and me to make a difference. How are we being salt, seasoning the life of the other person, the life of our neighbor? Where is our light dispersing the darkness?