**Salt and Light: locked in, or sent out?**

Matthew 5:11-16

John 20:19-23

**Matthew 5:11-16**

**11**“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. **12**Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**13**“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.

**14**“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. **15**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. **16**In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

* beatitudes define what it means to follow Jesus
* character that results from a practiced belief in the gospel

These verses change the focus: our relation to the world

* if you have this relationship with God (v.1-10), then you will have this relationship with the world (v.11-16)

Jesus says three things:

1. you will be salt of the earth
2. you will be light of the world
3. you will be hurt
4. **you will be the salt of the earth**

* in ancient times salt was used both for flavor and preserving
* put salt where food was in danger of breaking down … stems the decay

Intriguing image

* see someone’s life falling apart
* many respond: I’m out of here, that is going to be too draining … beyond me
* Jesus says: step toward – go in to stem the decay

**Col.1:17** He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

* we know what it is to have a dis-integrating life
  + so we step forward to listen, be present, pray, 'provide' in the name of Jesus
* it is Jesus who can bring coherence & cohesion

So when we see things coming apart – we hear the Gospel

* to be salt means to be involved

1. **We are the light of the world**

* different metaphor
* when Jesus talks about salt, he is saying something about human society: it tends to decay
* when Jesus talks about light, he is also saying something about human society

Light symbolizes truth

* it exposes falsehood
* it reveals hope, or joy
* meaning: Christians bring hope, joy through the truth
* both metaphors see us moving forward as first responders ...

Locked in or Sent out?

**John 20:19-23**

**19**On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders,  Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” **20**After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

**21**Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” **22**And with that he breathed on them and said,  “Receive the Holy Spirit. **23**If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

* this is the story of the gospel
* Jesus is always arriving unannounced and changing everything
* when we have locked ourselves up in some kind of self protective room ... or behind walls
  + Jesus comes to us
  + He stands in our midst
  + He speaks words of peace
  + breathes out His Spirit upon us
  + invites to live in His mission

It is 'Easter Sunday evening'

* Judas dead; Thomas absent
* 10 present (possible a few others)
* had been a long frightening week
* their hopes buried with Jesus' body in Joseph's tomb

They knew his body was missing

* confused
* officials were telling everyone that Jesus' body had been stolen
* but Mary had a different story - 'I have met the Lord'
* some disciples were saying they had met angels ...

Not part of their worldview

* that Messiah would be crucified
* resurrection wasn't something that would happen in the middle of history's story, but at the very end ... when everybody would rise from the dead
* were 'afraid' ...
* even if Jesus were alive, why would he want to invest anymore in them ...
* after 3 years they denied and/or ran away

Jesus walked in and changed everything

* perhaps you find yourself in a dark room
* due to your own sin, or the sin of others
* locked in ... feeling disqualified

Good news!

* this has to do with who Jesus is, and what He did

**1. the peace of Christ**

* this is where the story begins
* doesn't begin with the disciples searching for Jesus
* relationship is restored because Jesus finds them / us
* doesn't depend on their guilt, confession, how bad they feel ...
* depends on the grace of the Lord Himself
  + he knows where they are - not just geographically

Order of the next three actions are critical

* first, He declares his peace upon them
* appears in the room
* more than just: 'don't be afraid'
* 'Shalom'
* immediately followed by a presentation of his wounds

**20**After he said this, he showed them his hands and side.

Then he pronounces peace a second time

* the peace they desperately need has just been given to them by Jesus
* and it cost him his life
  + peace - look - peace

The death and resurrection are the defining acts of God's redeeming presence in all of creation

* His wounds give power to the declaration of peace
* peace to you in His name
* He will secure peace within where shame rules
* He will secure peace without where evil empowers fear of death

**2. the plan of Christ**

* this peace becomes the foundation for moving out in His mission
* no sustainable mission without sustainable peace
  + peace be with you
  + look at my wounds
  + peace be with you

'Now I am sending you out as my Father sent me'

* ambassadors of that peace
* we give what we have received

Moving out of locked rooms

* are we living today in this peace?
* or has anxiety pushed peace off the throne
* serving notice on anxiety, self hatred, guilt
* move out of your locked up place into the lasting power of His peace

God is always looking for those who will respond to His sending

* Noah, Abraham, Moses
* Esther, Abigail, Naomi, slave girl of Namaan
* prophets
* John the Baptist, disciples
* now you and me

We all are gifted and equipped to be sent

* walk across the room
* walk across the driveway
* walk across the street
* walk across the world

**3. the breath of Christ**

And with that (His sending) he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit."

* first a breath, then the rushing wind of God
* take this out of the abstract

Spirit is sent into the world and that changed everything

* He takes everything of Jesus and makes it known immediately all over the world

I want to focus three works of the Spirit upon everyone who follows Jesus

1. the Spirit creates new life within us

* act of God where He imparts His life into our soul or spirit
* will remain dead to God and alive towards sin without this act of God
* 'if anyone is in Christ they are a new creation'
* 'Nic. you must be born again'

Many church goers who have never been born again

* there is no spiritual life without the miracle
* Spirit has been given to re-birth us

1. the Spirit enables new wholeness / holiness

* many because of ignorance, willfulness, stubbornness, choosing habitual sin
* Holy Spirit is living in them - but they have not been gripped by the Holy Spirit
* need to encounter a 'second work of grace, a second blessing, the baptism of the Holy Spirit'

This is my story

* my conversion began as a young child at camp
* clarified through a crisis (murder-suicide)
* Winnipeg pastors fellowship, David Ruis, Argentina, continued learning and experience

Have I needed more fillings?

* daily, sometimes hourly

Could it be that some here are a stranger to the Holy Spirit?

1. Spirit gives us power for mission

* we call this a gifting, an anointing, a holy boldness
* see it in the book of Acts
* repeated experience - most often connected to prayer, laying on hands, anointing with oil
* not just symbolism - we actually believe something is being imparted

**Luke 11:13**

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

* if this seems confusing ...
* Jesus died to give you the Holy Spirit
* there will come a time when you are hungry for more
* less of me, more of Jesus
* Holy Spirit will enable us to do this - to be salt and light

When we receive the Holy Spirit there is an assignment that goes with it

* is controversial as well

1. the Spirit gives us an assignment

**23**If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

What a shocking statement

* we expect him to say: go into all the world and make disciples of all nations ...
* according to John this is the great commission!?

First, I do not believe Jesus is giving us sole power to forgive or not forgive sin

* God alone has the power and authority to do this
* so from this perspective the pressure is off

Second, I believe that forgiveness is going to be the prime activity, theme, and tone of our mission

* forgiveness will be on display as we live our life
* they will know us by our love
* our love will demonstrated in our forgiveness
* this will be lived out through our forgiveness

Think about this in the context of what we are learning

* Jesus arrives inside of their locked place
* declares His peace upon them
* shows them His wounds
* again declares His peace upon them
* sends them out on mission
  + note the connection between His sending and His wounds

'as the Father has sent me', and these wounds resulted

* I am sending you into the world and you are going to be wounded
* no wonder we are going to be called to forgive
* to forgive those who wound us
* on the cross he prayed: Father forgive them

To be sent is to be wounded

* every pastor
* every team leader
* everyone who is a friend and neighbour in the name of Jesus

There is a cost to discipleship

* (NET) 'If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone’s sins, they are retained.'
* I understand that!
* why would we every want to retain someone's sins against us?
* you are the salt of the earth
* you are the light of the world
* peace to you
* look at my wounds
* peace to you
* receive my Spirit
* now go