**“The Light of the World”**

Isaiah 58:3-9a

1 Corinthians 2:1-12

Matthew 5:13-20

Epiphany 5

“You are The Light of the World. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, etc.”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

I read the rest of that key text as “**etc**.” since, again, **the rest stems from the beginning (and that’s most of the point)**. Jesus here is continuing to **reveal** **HIMSELF AS THE BEGINNING OF EVERYTHING GOOD (AND “SALTY” AND “BRIGHT) … then (and because of that), WHO and HOW WE ARE (who are baptized and following as people that are IN HIM)**. See, every Good epiphany shows first and foremost **Jesus**, then (and because of that **in Him**) **those** **connected to Him by a baptismal promise received in the “amen” of faith**. The Season of Epiphany (and every epiphany of any Good kind) is an epiphany (or showing) of **Jesus then and us in Him**. **His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew’s chapters 5, 6, and 7) teaches that … therefore is a highly appropriate Epiphany text in every way**. We’re given Jesus **teaching that from it** again, like He did last week and will, again now, today, and then also next week before we get to the Transfiguration. Jesus **teaches** **a revelation of everything (an epiphany or, rather, His showing of Himself and any who are in and with Him)**. It’s **so critical** a teaching that we dedicate the **entire Church Year calendar** to it **(Him then us … and not just a season)** and Luther’s Small Catechism (so what we’re liable for) **teaches it (and, really, ONLY IT): the IDENTIFICATION OF JESUS AND US AS WE’RE IN HIM**. He is the **fulfilled LAW (the “Commandments”)** as well as the **accomplished GOSPEL (“Creedally” documented**. He is, also, **GOD’S WORD OF COMMUNICATION AND CONVERSATION (Preaching and Prayer)** Then He is (so that we have Him) every **SACRAMENTAL / MYSTERIOUS EMINATION AND DELIVERY OF HIMSELF TO ANY PERSON (again, Preaching and Baptism, Absolution, and the Holy Supper**. **HE** is **WHAT DISCIPLES HAVE AND ENJOY TO, THEMSELVES, REFLECT: EXHIBITING HIS BRIGHTNESS TO ILLUMINATE AND FLAVOR THIS WORLD THAT WE’RE (WITH HIM) A BLESSING TO**.

**Text**

So “**you, then**, **ARE** the **salt of the earth** and the **light of the world**” which is not a **natural** condition for humans to be **OF** because of Adam’s fall and, therefore, our **original** and then **active** sin following that fact. But **God graciously made** baptized believers **to BE HIS SON’S SALT AND LIGHT, and that for the spreading of the saving Word** **into this fallen world**. By **birth nature** (without God’s Word and Sacrament intervention onto and into us), we are (with King David, as one for instance) “sinners from our mother’s womb”, one of the “all” that aren’t “righteous of ourselves (no one is / not one), “all” (every human ever from the Fall) having sinned and so falling short of the glory of God”, so **not of ourselves** “the salt of the earth nor the light of the world”. But with **Word and Sacrament intervention by God’s will, promises and power**, those statements Jesus makes (self-proclamation and of us in Him) are **true**. His own people are made to be (with Him by His full nature) “Salt” and “light”, and though a “Humanist” philosopher might use phrases like this about secular humanity upon this planet, examples like Hitler and other cruel terrorist leaders and militant aggressors that think it’s OK to kill civilians show philosophical “Humanism” to be a World View that can’t be defended. Any who’d be made and called this earth’s “salt” and “light”, can only be by divine **EDICT** **ascribed** that by **connection** (**BEING IN) the only One (from Heaven) Who really the earth’s “Salt” and “Light” … then GIFTS THOSE**.

For any to be **IDENTIFIED AS** **“salt” and “light” for this earth**,that must become fact / **ASCRIBED TO PEOPLE BY DIVINE GIFTS FREELY GRANTED OUT OF THE MERIT OF THE ONE WHO IS BOTH OF THOSE THINGS AND CAN GIVE IT TO SHINE AND FLAVOR** (**justice served getting there by only the One Who is that justice and can grant it)**. The **Gospel** is of the **FAVORABLE SERVING OF JUSTICE and then GIFTING OF THE MERITS OF THAT**. That’s why “In **Him and the Cross of Christ I Glory**” we will sing later on to **remind ourselves** of all of that **FAVORABLE SERVING OF JUSTICE and its GIFT OF THE MERITS OF IT**. **Jesus and His sufficient, sacrificial, death on a cross IS WHAT EARNED IT: the “earth’s salt (and ‘SALTINESS”) and light for the world (it’s real and only significant / eternally-available BRIGHT SPOT is “CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED”**.

The **epiphany** of Jesus’ teaching (and teachings) **is THAT “SALT” AND “LIGHT”**. Paul calls the **IT** of the Gospel (Good News) the **“secret and hidden wisdom of God, decreed before the ages FOR OUR GLORY”**. It’s **“secret and hidden as the wisdom of** God because it’s **FROM** **the simplicity (and, yet, complication) of trusting in that as “FOR OUR GLORY” by Divine Promise … it’s promised to be ascribeD to us in Christ**.

Jesus teaching of **disciples this epiphany is** **a** **catechism lesson (the only one)**: don’t lose what you’ve been made and given as your “saltiness” in Him, nor bury beneath coverings (out of public view) “the Light” that is **HIM AND THE GOSPEL NEWS GOOD FOR ALL PEOPLE**. Again, all of that’s **HIM (ALL OF IT):** the “saltiness” and flavor of this world and beyond He allows us to **reflect (BE IT AND CONTINUE BEING IT AND SHOWING IT (FLAVOR THAT’S HIM AND THE SUFFERING OF THE CROSS)**. That’s the victory (the “**LIGHT**”) of Who did that and **THAT** **shining in every context**. Paul “**decided to** know **nothing” besides IT**. He considered **IT ALL THAT’S WORTH KNOWING AND ALL THAT’S WORTH SHARING:** **“JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED” (“FLAVOR” AND “LIGHT” SAVORABLE AND CRIMINAL IF NOT LET TO SHINE EVERYWHERE**.

**Application**

The **application of this teaching and preaching (the gift of becoming “glorified” by God in Christ Jesus)** is the gift and responsibility of, **by us,** **reflecting IT as it always ought be reflected**. “If salt has **lost its** taste, how shall its saltiness **be restored**” except for by the **re-GIFTING** **of the SAME THING OVER AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN: THE GOSPEL (forgiveness and its renewal through Christ’s bloodshed**. Without what **SAVED US IN US**, **non-salty “salt” (Jesus says) is “no longer** **Good for anything except** **to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet”**, and **those “hiding the Light of Christ and the Gospel of His work on the cross”** is sin (“not letting others see the **Good works of God” in you, hearing from you of that “Salt” and “Light” in Christ Jesus and “giving to the Father in Heaven glory” in our speaking of it in the contexts of this world, demonstrating and preaching and teaching of HIM (THE “SALT AND LIGHT”) ourselves**.

**Here’s** **Jesus’ point**: “unless **your righteousness** **exceeds (IN CHRIST JESUS) that of the scribes and Pharisees** **(and scribes and Pharisees denied the GOSPEL GIFT OF SALVATION and their need for it in a repentant faith**), you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” He’s **ASCRIBED TO US THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS / THAT SALT AND SALTINESS AND PERFECT FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW IN HIM**. “**We preach** **CHRIST JESUS, GOD’S SON, AND HIM CRUCIFIED FOR US AND FOR OUR SALVATION … A GLORY TO US. May that be what we reflect always THE SALT AND LIGHT OF HIM AND HIS CROSS: HE and IT in Words and life and the sharing of HIM and IT … and the sharing IN IT with Him)** **…** **IN** Jesus’ name. Amen.