

Wednesday Reflection

Title: Salt and Light

Date: February 8, 2026

ID: 5th Sunday of the Year (A cycle)

Scripture: Matthew 5:13-16

Text: The Sermon on the Mount begins with evocative proclamations, the Beatitudes, that call forth the deepest desires of our hearts and souls. This weekend's section of the Sermon becomes an imperative, a challenge to disciples.

Brief words count. Jesus says *you* are salt; *you* are light. Israel is not salt and light; the Temple is not; the Torah (the Law) is not; the church is not; our worship and prayer are not. He says *you—we*—are salt and light. Jesus is always with his community until his arrest. He always attracts companions. In His presence, companions become disciples, and disciples become missionaries. In time, disciples will need to organize the church and will seek Communion with Him through their worship. But the organized collectivity and activity do not substitute for our personal responsibility to be salt and light.

Note the field for our missionary work. You are salt *of the earth*; You are light *of the world*. Social boundaries—we/they thinking—disappear. Jesus does not send us to a nation, a tribe, a race, or any subset of the human family. We are missionaries to the whole world. Also read the Lord's last words to his disciples in chapter 28 verse 18/19. His last words are also universal. Note, too, the direction the Lord sends us: it is not up and out of this world but into the world for the world.

These words imply a warning and an honor. If we refuse to be the light, the world will grow dark. Tasteless salt is useless. Recall when John the Baptist warned Israel's leadership that "God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones" (3:9). If we fail as people of the Beatitudes, God will find fresh salt and brighter light. The re-creation of this world will be done.

The biblical history of light confers a great honor on disciples. Recall that light is the first thing God created (Genesis 1:1-3). But notice that the author waits to create the sources of light, the sun and moon, until verse 14. If light is not the physical energy from the sun, we need to ask what that first light is. We get an answer in Isaiah, which was written about the same time. When God's people needed salvation from exile, the prophet proclaimed: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isaiah 9:1). Light is salvation. The poet of Genesis asserts that God intended to save even before God creates. John adds to Isaiah's insight: "What came to be through him was life and this life was the light of the human race" (John 1:4). Before creation, Jesus is the life that is light, the salvation of the world. And now Jesus calls his disciples the light of the world. Contemplate, please, how our light might shine in the darkness.