

“This Little Light of Mine”

Thomas Robinson, *Light of the World* 3, April 29, 2018

Matthew 5:13-16

¹¹ “**Blessed** are **you** when people insult you, persecute you and say everything evil against you because of me. ¹² **Rejoice** and be **glad**, because great is your reward in God’s realm (the heavens), 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 has been made tasteless (foolish),
with what will it be salted?
It has no strength for anything
except when its thrown out to be trampled by people.

¹⁴ **You are the light of the world** (*kosmos*).
A **city** cannot be hidden when it’s set on a hill.
¹⁵ 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.
¹⁶ In the same way, **let your light shine before people**,
so that they may see **your beautiful deeds**
and give glory to **your Father** who is in the heavens.”

Mark 9:49-50

³⁹ “For everyone will be salted by fire. ⁵⁰ Salt is beautiful, but if the salt becomes salt-less, how will you season it again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Luke 14:33-35

³³ “Thus every one of you who is not setting aside everything as belonging to themselves cannot be my disciple. ³⁴ Salt is beautiful, but if salt has been made tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? ³⁵ It’s not fit for the ground or for the manure pile. They throw it away. Those who have ears to hear, let them hear.”

Philippians 2:12-16a

¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, with “fear and trembling” bring your salvation to its full effect,
¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do it all without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a “crooked and twisted generation,” among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to a word/message of life....

Ephesians 5:8-17

⁸ At one time, you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord! Walk as children of light.
⁹ Light produces fruit in every sort of goodness, justice, and truth. ¹⁰ Test everything to see what’s pleasing to the Lord, ¹¹ and don’t participate in actions of darkness that don’t produce good fruit. Instead, you should reveal the truth about them. ¹² It’s shameful to even talk about what some do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed to the light is revealed by the light.
¹⁴ Everything that is revealed by the light is light. Therefore, it says (Isa 60:1), Wake up, sleeper! Get up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. ¹⁵ So be careful how you walk, not foolishly but as wise. ¹⁶ Take advantage of every occasion (*kairos*) because these are evil times.
¹⁷ Because of this, don’t be foolish, but learn to understand the Lord’s will.

Isaiah 42:6-7 Yahweh to his chosen servant

⁶ “I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, ⁷ to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.”

What is Jesus Saying?

In talking about resurrection through the phrase, “Light of the World,” we have talked about Jesus. He says, “I am the light of the world” (Jn 8:12). He illumines ever person.

God shines in our hearts to show his glory in the face of Jesus in his amazing self-giving love in Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection. We are changed by the encounter.

Jesus brings that change to a sharp point in the Sermon on the Mount: Galilee crowds, sick and suffering, Jesus’ new disciples. He begins with Beatitudes: “Blessed are they...,” but at the end turns it to “Blessed are you...,” insulted, persecuted, slandered. What?

It’s then that he says “You are the salt...the light of the world!” Who me? I’m just one more burdened disciple, needing healing, scared of insults. But Jesus states it as fact. True?

Think of Jesus’ options for the Kingdom of God: Miraculous intervention; political takeover as messiah king, “mass communication” (J.C. Superstar) many others. Why is he on a hillside with crowds seeking help? Challenging these poor folks with the “Sermon.”

This is the same story as incarnation and resurrection. They are God drawing God’s life and human life together. Coming into human life. Drawing our physical, human life beyond death into God’s own life. The event of Gospel. Jesus looks at these ordinary people and says you are the real focus of this event. You are God’s “mass communication.”

It comes in images that challenge us to think in new ways, to find ourselves in the story.

Salt, light? Be salty! Shine! Engage enough that you might be insulted. The great story of the world is not with Herod or Caesar, it’s with you! Don’t let that be trivial. Salt-less salt. Light under a basket. Let your light shine! My light? I need light. Yes. I give it to you.

What is Jesus Saying to Me?

I like “This little light of mine.” Jesus knows my light is little. The Logos, the creator became little. What’s important is not size but what light it is that’s shining and that it shines!

Salt flavors food, keeps it from going bad. In darkness, a light stand in contrast to the darkness and opens a space of clarity, recognition, potential beauty, destroying dark.

Sonja lived on a Saskatchewan farm before electric power came through. Real darkness.

Fannie Lou Hamer biography, “This Little Light of Mine” (Kay Mills). A sharecropper farmer’s wife in Mississippi 100 years after the civil war didn’t know about any right to vote. 1962 ...

Jesus wants to get into my heart, my vision, who I am. Can I see God’s kingdom here. Paul says God will work in me in desire and doing to bring kingdom salvation to full effect. He doesn’t give me exact rules, but calls us to full participation, embodying resurrection life.

How am I going to Respond?

What is the house we live in where our light shines? Not much, but with God it will do his Kingdom, resurrection work. My family, profession, research, artistry, great job, dull job, difficult relationship, politics, business project, music, philosophy, parenting, etc.

Can I open myself to let Jesus’ vision shape me? Can I let him light my lamp and set it out.