

“This Is Our Identity: Salt & Light”

Message by DD Adams

Providence Kemptown Church

5th SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

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Today’s reading is from Matthew’s gospel, chapter 5, verses 13 through 20.

¹³“You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its saltiness, how will it become salty again? It’s good for nothing except to be thrown away and trampled under people’s feet. ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city on top of a hill can’t be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on top of a lampstand, and it shines on all who are in the house.

¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Father who is in heaven. ¹⁷“Don’t even begin to think that I have come to do away with the Law and the Prophets. I haven’t come to do away with them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸I say to you very seriously that as long as heaven and earth exist, neither the smallest letter nor even the smallest stroke of a pen will be erased from the Law until everything there becomes a reality.

¹⁹Therefore, whoever ignores one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be called the lowest in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever keeps these commands and teaches people to keep them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰I say to you that unless your righteousness is

greater than the righteousness of the legal experts and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. This is God's word for God's people.

Please pray with me. God bless the reading, hearing, and understanding of your word. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

The message title defines Jesus disciples, "This Is Our Identity: Salt and Light." It describes our unique nature as his children, and it can fuel us for serving others. It's who we are in this world, and it's our purpose for living.

The message last Sunday was part one and today is part two of Jesus' sermon on the Beatitudes. Jesus is firm and absolute and states, "You are salt. You are light." Jesus didn't say you should be or you will be or I wish you were. Jesus said you are! What Jesus didn't say is—once you get your act together. Or, after you pay off your debts. Or, when you have more time. Or, when you learn how to talk to people.

Jesus said "*You are* the salt of the earth" and "*You are* the light of the world." If this isn't validation of who we are then I'm not sure what is. Jesus affirms us and declares who and what we are and just how much we need the one who rescued us from sin. It convinces us of our need for a prayer life that's consistently leaning on our Savior.

God created salt. We know it seasons and preserves and stops decay. Our bodies need salt, and it's required for life on the planet. Point being, as God's children, you are critical to your family's life and the world. You might be the only Bible some may see on this earth because you keep this world from rotting.

Now imagine what the body of Christ can do together. We're so much more than just our *personal* faith. We're a community of faith that comes together as one, with Christ as the head of the body. We come together to stir one another up, to fan that flame that burns within us, and to see where help is needed. We have such a powerful potential when we come together. Our faith radiates to more than our family, extended family, and friends; it spreads through the world when we serve others.

There are times I simply run out of gas, what about you? I run out of time, and get discouraged. I lose hope for a moment, *but* it's then more than ever I get down on my knees and pray for the love of God to fill me, and to surround me with light. To put a new and right spirit within me. It's when I sense Christ's close presence that his light fills me up and changes my attitude.

Just getting to church is a way to let your light shine. Jesus tells us we're the light of the world, and we should let our light shine! To not hide it, but let it radiate out from us so others would see that light that guides us with its comfort and encouragement.

Light can mean many things. It's that hope that God pours into us when we pray. In the previous chapter, Matthew quotes Jesus and reminds us of the prophet Isaiah (9:2a), that "the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light." When you come to worship, you affect the worship of others who need encouragement. The light we've seen and experienced helps others to see that light and the great power it has to turn that light on in them.

We're called to be the body of Christ in ministry to all the world and to let our light shine, to not hide or dampen it. This brings God glory, and it radiates out from us giving hope and love to those around us.

The "so what" of this message is this. We can't give this light to others unless we know the light and have received and experienced it. The light that God gives comes from within and isn't meant for just me and mine. This light of God within us that radiates out from us is meant for the world—for all people.

Think about it, where have you seen light this week? And how have you been light and how has it been reflected back to you? Let's remind ourselves, even just the smallest light you bring with you on Sunday morning can make all the difference for someone that day. Now imagine, what does it mean when we take this light outside of the church for all to see? Let's let our light shine and allow the light to radiate out from us to bring others love and mercy and grace.

Please pray with me. Lord of all light and hope, show us this morning what it means to let our light shine. We pray for understanding. We push away any indifference. Jesus, show us how this light you have put within us is able to bring understanding, direction and hope to others. Amen.