

Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> February , 2023

Restore the streets

Materials from Roots Bible Study

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Restorer God,  
we praise you for who you are –  
our healer and our redeemer.  
Your light has broken forth like the dawn.  
You came into our darkness to live among us,  
your body broken on the cross that we might live.  
We cry out to you and you respond: 'Here I am'.  
Transforming God, we adore you.  
**Amen.**

**Read : Matthew 5.13-20**

**Bible notes**

Jesus states that these two natural things have obvious purposes:

- salt to impart saltiness
- light to illuminate.

In this parable, salt can change to lose its saltiness. When this happens, it is no longer good for anything. We may wonder, in what ways can we change for the worse as disciples, or change our essential nature to the point that we are no longer recognisable as disciples? Do we cease to be 'salty' when we lose an awareness of our poverty of spirit, for instance; or when we cease to engage with communities as merciful peacemakers who thirst for justice? Salt is a substance that transforms the things that it is mixed with. Is Jesus making a point about the way we engage with those around us?

Light, on the other hand, makes an environment safe. In the days before street lighting and electric light bulbs, travelling at dusk or in the dark must have been very difficult. Imagine the relief that someone would feel on spotting the light given out by a city on a hill. Domestically, it would make no sense to ignite a light and then to hide it away.

The qualities of character and moral choices described in the context of this passage are to be lived out with others and for others. Jesus' words about the law in verses 17 to 19 are a preface to intensifying the qualities that God requires of us.

**Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

Salt describes something that happens internally or within a certain substance – it is immediately identifiable by taste. Light is something that happens externally – outside in the landscape or filling a space.

Perhaps Jesus chose these metaphors to make sure that the inside and outside of life – our interior world of thought, our exterior world of objects and actions – are both covered in our understanding of discipleship. Most of us lean towards one sphere or the other.

- How can we learn to appreciate the outer or inner world that seems less important to us?
- How can we appreciate one another's differences and work together, so that our strengths are complementary?

### **A prayer of thanksgiving**

Father God,

thank you that you have prepared for us  
far more than we can ever hope, believe or imagine;  
no eye, no ear, no heart can conceive  
what you have prepared for those who love you.

That is so amazing!

Thank you that you restore us and transform us  
to become the people you have called us to be.

Thank you that you are the light of the world.

Thank you that you are the salt of the earth.

Thank you that in you we can be salt and light too,  
that we can go out and revitalise our communities,  
bringing hope and renewal to our families, our friends,  
our neighbours and our churches.

**Amen.**

### **A prayer to conclude**

Light of the world, shine through us.

Like salt of the earth,  
scatter us where there is need.

Help us work together  
to repair and renew,  
to rebuild and rejoice  
throughout this place.

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**