

You who blesses us as salt and light, illumine your words that we might savour what you offer us and celebrate what you call us to be. Amen

A woman was checking out at the grocery store one morning and as she picked up her bags to leave, the cheerful cashier said, "Have a wonderful day!" to which the woman replied "Sorry, I have other plans for today."ⁱ

In his bible translation, *The Message*, Eugene Peterson presents this scriptural story as follows:

¹³ "Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ "Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine!

Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God.ⁱⁱ

We are called to bring out the God-flavours of this earth and the God-colours in the world. I wonder what that might look like for us.

I suppose we could be salt by becoming like salty sailors, grumpy, foul mouthed, walking the earth with our sea-legs saunter/sway. But somehow, I don't think that's what Jesus is talking about here!

In scripture, we see salt used in a variety of ways.

In rabbinical metaphorical language, salt connoted wisdom and was used for ratifying covenants as well as in liturgical functions.ⁱⁱⁱ

Indeed salt, and a relationship with God seems to be inextricably linked.

So to lose ones saltiness, is to lose ones connection with God – to forget whose we are and why we're here, which, according to Peterson's biblical translation, is to bring out the God-flavors of this earth so that others, too, might see and know God in and through us.

I have to admit, sometimes I wonder if the 21st Century church at large, is losing its saltiness. Has worship become bland, appeasing rather than challenging? Are our actions for a better world bland, pandering to our guilt rather than pushing us to the margins? Have we become like a meal with no salt, no flavour? Have we opted to simply worship Jesus rather than truly follow him?

I wonder if we have become so concerned with providing tasty morsels for those in our midst that we forget we are called to season the whole world.

I wonder if we have become so ho-hum about who we worship and why, that we have allowed ourselves to become consumed with dwindling numbers and decreasing energy, thinking that it is within our power to change things ... or not, rather than seeking the salty wisdom of God and being attentive to what Spirit is doing in our midst.

Salt changes what it is added to, enhancing the flavours. To lose our saltiness is to lose our desire to see and experience change, to embrace the changing possibilities in the vision God sets before us – a vision that will enhance us as the church.

If we, the church, lose our saltiness, lose our ability and desire to be truly present in the world, how will people ever taste godliness?

We are also called to be light. Like a beacon, leading people safely onward; allowing others to see God through our actions, through our living, through our witness, within and beyond the walls of any church building.

To be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world, is to acknowledge and celebrate diversity – in creation, in traditions, in theological perspectives, in skin colour, in personalities – diversity is all around us. We are called to let our light shine so that others, too, can see the joy of diversity and celebrate it with us?

If we hide our light, if we leave it to burn only dimly, or let it go out altogether, not only does it prevent others from seeing, it also prevents us from seeing beyond our own short line of vision, our own minute perspective. And there is so much more than that to see and experience. There's a whole world of God-colours out there!

It is only through letting our light shine that we and others are able to see God, in ourselves and in one another. And it is only by seeing God in others that we are able to live those Beatitudes we reflected on just two short weeks ago. Celebrating the diversity of a world of blessed people.

So imagine, if you will, a church filled with light, a church filled with God's saltiness.

"How might even our small 'lights' make all the difference? Indeed, what does it mean for you and me and us together to 'let our lights shine' as Jesus calls us to now?

How might those lights and enhanced flavours of life bring understanding and direction and hope?

How are we being called to be light and salt right now?

How are we being called to be light and salt tomorrow [and in the days to come]?"^{iv}

Will we dare to go public, like a city on a hill? Like the light-bearers that we are, will we dare to shine?

Or will we simply respond with "Sorry, we have other plans for today."?

ⁱSenior Donald. <https://www.patheos.com/resources/additional-resources/2011/01/salt-and-light-job-description-alyce-mckenzie-01-31-2011.aspx?p=2>

ⁱⁱ Peterson, Eugene. The Message

ⁱⁱⁱ Hill as found in Senior, Donald. *ibid*

^{iv} <http://dancingwiththeword.com/you-are-the-light-of-the-world/>