

- [1 Corinthians 2:1-12, \[13-16\]](#)
- [Matthew 5:13-20](#)
- [Psalm 112:1-9, \(10\)](#)

Set us free, O God, from the bondage of our sins, and give us the liberty of that abundant life which you have made known to us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

You are the Salt of the Earth.  
You are the light of the World.

For some of you, when you hear these words.....immediately the tune begins within you.

It's inescapable.

Stephen Schwarz's melody begins to rise within you and your toes start tapping to the tune that 1971 off Broadway musical "Godspell" sings to you.

**YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.**

You immediately remember the red record album with this Leonardo da Vinci-esque head of Jesus on the front cover: black, white and red.

You can recite this entire piece of gospel because it was sung to you with conviction, determination, and instruction.

YOU are the salt of the Earth- BUT....

YOU are the Light of the world AND.....

Even now, when one of my days seems to be going completely wrong- it is the chorus to Godspell's "all for the best" comes into my head.

More specifically, I don't remember that the title/chorus was "you guessed it's all for the best," instead, I remember the litany that is sung out in that same song, offered up. The humanity and brokenness of relationships and to top it all off the song says "AND my olive tree is dying."

Growing up, music was always a part of our household, singing a song to clean up things, singing in choir, to singing to cassette tapes in the car.

I remember the Godspell record playing loudly, while my mother ironed shirts.

Music with words of hope and humanity amidst the ordinary- the ironing and child raising.

She sang along and, after a while, I sang along too... sometimes with the correct words, sometimes filling the gaps with my own..... the tune and the words stuck with me.

The melodies found me in the midst of my need for comfort, wisdom, inspiration.

In many ways, these tunes have lit my path of faith.

Music, sung to or by us, carries the message with humanity, emotion, invitation.

Invitation in this “new” way to hear the Gospel, the good news amidst our own ordinary.

We are invited to hear this message of Hope that Jesus gives us,  
YOU are the salt,  
YOU are the Light.

Now, I don’t know about you but when you bake, you need to measure the amount of salt in your baking otherwise it will not turn out well. And Confusing salt with Sugar is just a horrible mistake.

AND I am now at that age where the flashlight on my phone has made reading a dinner menu so much easier. Light means so much to our lives.

The Gospel of Matthew is written as in instruction manual to the early church.

The nascent gathering of followers of this new way of living wanted to know how then to BE church, to be a gathering, to be with each other.

After Matthew has told us who Jesus is, Matthew settles into instructing us how then we are to live.

For those who are type A's, Jesus is giving you a manual on how to live. Like a great recipe, Matthew is saying do exactly this and you will be a community. Follow these directions.

Isn't that amazing? You can highlight it in pink highlighter, if you want to- it's easy- do this, don't do that.

For those of you who are not Type A's—take a breath- the gospel of course is not that easy..... like humidity in baking bread, there are uncontrollable factors that make things complicated. Life in community is complex and try as we make it, life doesn't always follow a formula. You know that already and you, too, can rejoice in this gospel and gospel writer.

Like the rich young ruler who will come to Jesus in Matthew's Chapter 19, living out our faith is not just do's and don'ts, faith-filled living is not just keeping commandments.....it's involving our hearts and being the light- in mind, body, and spirit.

We have been given lights upon our path and we are to be the light. From the words of proverbs (and the praise song)- Thy word is a light unto our path.

Simeon, the faithful priest, who speaks to those gathered when Jesus (not a groundhog) is presented 40 days after his birth and speaks about Jesus' being a light to enlighten the nations.

You are the Light of the world.

To today, YOU (not the person beside you) YOU are the light of the world.

Jesus is talking to you.

And this message from Jesus is  
Hope  
A New Way  
Light in the darkness  
Guiding us  
Turning our world upside down  
And yet calling,  
Calling us by name  
YOU, yes YOU, are the light, too.

In January, I was given the incredible opportunity to travel with The Very Rev. Dr. Battle to Capetown, South Africa. As a part of the Tutu Travel seminar, we listened to the stories of those who were personally involved with the anti-apartheid movement. We listened to the stories of faith

leaders and laity who shared the light of love for each and every child of God, regardless of if they were brown, black or white. With the institutional abolishment of apartheid in 1994, their country's story of freedom is still a young one and yet the light of hope, the shine of joy, the gift of deep grounded hope shown on each face as they shared their part of the story AND where the journey has led them now.

As a group of 12 curious individuals in a minivan (none of us fisherpeople, but very much following along asking, like the disciples, a GAZILLION questions) we were nourished not only with the abundance of the earth but the overflowing love shared with us, grounded in faith and hope that god's beloved community could come together, make change and endure.

One person who shone exceptionally with joy, was a woman named Renee August. She exuded joy. Remember the scripture about Moses encountering God and when he came down from the mountain, how his face was sooooo shiny and full of God's light that he had to wear a veil? Renee's face reminded me of what that sort of joy might look like on a person. She radiated gladness, giddiness, and choosing to hear love beyond adversity. She spent several years with Arch Bishop Tutu as a part of his staff and as a family friend.

She shared with us the story of Arch Bishop's leadership and also her experience of the ArchBishop as a mentor, friend, and pastor. She invited

us into her story, to walk alongside of her in deep moments of frustration, struggle and also joy. She invited us to be a companion with her despite our differences.

Renee spoke of Archbishop Tutu's testament to loving each person and calling others to do so likewise. Despite differences, Archbishop Tutu called you to the light, right where you were. If you have seen Archbishop Tutu in videos, you saw this same delight and light. That deep joy was not ignoring the pain of life in your midst, it wasn't an act for show. Rather, the deep joy Archbishop Tutu reminded us of is that deep hope that god's kingdom is at work in the most mysterious of ways and will continue to unfold within and with each of us.

The light of love carries us forward, with hope, with endurance, with desire for change—the light of love calls us to share that light with others. Always quick to love and remind you that the light of love is the candle with which we are called to carry and light the path for others.

Like the childhood song sings, This little light of mine, I am going to let it shine.

Shine so that our faces too, radiate the close encounters of the divine. The close encounters with those who experience and delight in God's love for us and for all of creation.

Shine so that light is where love is so desperately needed.

The tune in our heart, mind, and soul should be the repeating chorus that the love of God is one that lights our path, is a lantern of sorts, clarifying the smallest of print to keep us moving forward even when we might not know how to take the next step forward.

Jesus' words of comfort console, embrace all of our humanity and answers our litany of grievances and why we can't possibly do the next thing with an invitation, the word AND enters into our vocabulary, our capability to respond and show compassion.

AND

Let that light shine.

The light of love, the light of hope, the light of change in this world.

Amen.