

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Quincy, IL
Rev. Martin Eden

Epiphany 5
Saturday, February 4, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, February 5, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

“You are Salt – Don’t Believe the Lie”

Matthew 5:13-20

Our sinful world wants to believe the lie. Satan is the father of lies and he wants you to believe the lie. Jesus says, “You are the salt of the earth.” The only other option is that you are “not salt.” Either you are salt or you are not salt. There is no middle ground. The lie is that we can live comfortably both in the world and in the church. You cannot be salt and “not salt” at the same time. You cannot be light and darkness at the same time. You cannot be comfortable in both places.

You cannot be an evolutionist and a Christian. You cannot be comfortable with sin and comforted by the Gospel at the same time. This does not mean that Christians are free from all sin and darkness. You are simultaneously sinner and saint. There is a war going on within you. Through the grace of your Baptism, the Old Adam in you, by daily contrition and repentance drowns and dies, and daily arises to a new life in Christ.

If you see violence and it doesn’t make you uncomfortable; if you hear the name of God profaned and it doesn’t make you uncomfortable; then there is

something wrong. There is no battle being waged. You are in danger, as Paul says, of “exchanging the truth for a lie” [Romans 1:25].

We dare not make ourselves comfortable by dismissing what Jesus says about God’s Law. Jesus says that not an iota (not the smallest letter, not even a dot) will pass away from God’s Law. It is absolute. It is only accomplished, only fulfilled in Christ.

We dare not make ourselves comfortable by listening to a lie. We dare not embrace the lie that there is nothing truly right or wrong. There are only shades of grey. There is no absolute truth. There is only opinion. This is one of the favorite lies of the modern ear. The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche is credited with crystalizing this thought by saying “There are no facts, only interpretations.”

The reality is that this type of thought has been around for a long time. 2400 years ago, Aristotle criticized the philosopher Protagoras for stating that "man is the measure of all things," meaning that there is no absolute truth and that each person's perception of truth is subjective. You hear people say, “This is ‘my’ truth.” Aristotle called this an “irresponsible doctrine.”

Being made to listen to bad philosophers is nothing new. Sin is nothing new. Dismissing the Law of God is nothing new. Unfortunately, this type of irresponsible teaching that there is no truth has not just become popular, but has become the dominant philosophy among the young and the uninformed.

The Facebook page dedicated to Nietzsche has over three million followers. Tom Morris, the former chair of the Philosophy department at Notre Dame University, says that his brand of skeptical philosophy was always the favorite among his first year students. The young and uninformed love this irresponsible teaching because the young and uninformed always think there is a way to get around, if not completely abolish, God's Law.

Why do they want to abolish God's Law? I will turn again to Friedrich Nietzsche. He said, "No price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself." This is why he is so popular among the young and uninformed. I get to be my own man. Nobody owns me. Nobody can tell me what to do. "My body is mine." This is a lie that our unbelieving world desperately wants to believe. It enjoys believing this.

There is truth in the notion that owning you is worth any price. Your Father in heaven certainly believes this, which is why He offered up His Son as the ransom price for you. You are worth any price.

If I own myself, do I need to fear judgment? Again, Nietzsche has all the answers for the one who wants to believe the lie. Nietzsche went so far as to proclaim that "God is dead." And the young and uninformed embrace the concept – embrace the lie. This is a lie that they desperately want to believe.

Nietzsche is still being widely quoted. Most recently, his statement "That which does not kill us makes us stronger" has been widely embraced. It is in

songs and motivational posters. And it is a lie. Not everything that doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

This goes hand in hand with another lie: "What I do in the privacy of my own home doesn't hurt anyone." Sin always hurts someone. Sin always hurts those around you. Sin always hurts you. Sin always makes you weak. It does not make you stronger. Sin is our rejection of what God has designed our life to be.

The Law is written on your heart. When you relax even the least of God's commandments, (especially when you teach others to do the same), you will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. You don't want to be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

But you being great in the kingdom of heaven; you being the salt of the earth – the light of the world; this did not happen because you were able to work yourself free from sin. We have already confessed: "I am a poor, miserable sinner." We regularly confess: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But God, who is faithful and just, will forgive us all our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

You are salt because the truth is in you. The lie is that there is no truth. You are salt because God has purchased you, as His own, at the very high price of the broken body and shed blood of His Son. The lie is that you own yourself. You are salt because God is not dead. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.