

BIBLE STUDY
January 30, 2023

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Isaiah 58: 7-10

Matthew 5: 13-16

1 Corinthians 2: 1-5

1. Isaiah 58: 7-10

- The third Isaiah criticizes the way that some go about fasting. He says it is an exterior show that does not change their hearts. While they fast, they are arguing and fighting, mistreating their workers, and pursuing their own interests. This is not the kind of fast that the Lord asks for.
- V. 6: The Lord asks that his people fast from injustice and focus on treating people justly and fairly.
- V. 7: The right kind of fasting is feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, and not ignoring those in need.
- V. 8: If we do this, then we will become like the light of the rising sun that conquers the darkness of night. We will become better people. The wound of our selfishness and apathy will be healed. God's favor will walk with us and his glory will protect us.
- V. 9: If our fast becomes a passion for the well being of those in need, the Lord will hear our prayer and will answer us. If we work to free people from oppression, stop making false charges against others, and remove the evil from our speech, then we will be transformed.
- V. 10: If we go out of our way to feed the hungry and meet the needs of those who are suffering, then our light will shine in the darkness and the dreariness of a cloudy day will become like bright noontime.

2. Matthew

- V. 13: Jesus tells his disciples that they are the salt of the earth. In the ancient world, salt was a extremely valuable product. It preserved food. It was used to ratify covenants. Jesus is telling the disciples that they too are a valuable commodity. They can impact the world for the better. The Beatitudes ended with a praise of those who were being persecuted for their following of Jesus. These two sayings contrast tot hat last Beatitude by asserting that although they are persecuted, they are the world's salvation. Their relationship with the world (i.e., those opposed to Christ) is against and for.
- Jesus warns that salt can lose its flavor. The salt of the Dead Sea was defective and had no taste or value. It was useless. Christians who do not work to improve the world will become useless.
- V. 14: We are the light of the world. The light of a city on a hill will be visible throughout the whole country side. In the same way, Christians putting the Sermon on the Mount into practice will shine as brightly. However, there is also a warning. Just as it would be foolish to light a

lamp and then cover it, so it is a waste for Christians to not show forth the light of Christ by their words and deeds.

- If we let our light of our deeds shine, then people will notice and it will make them give glory to God. Notice that our good deeds do not reflect favorably on us, but on God. This is the first time in Matthew's Gospel that God is called Father, and not only Father, but "your" Father—Our Father. By our deeds of mercy, we enter an intimate relationship with God.

3. 1 Corinthians 2: 1-5

- Paul admits to the people of Corinth that he did not make a good first impression on them. Piecing together things that Paul writes in this and other letters, he was not a very good public speaker and he did not have a commanding appearance. He owns that and says that his strength and power was that of God. It was not about him, but all about God. He was there not to draw attention to himself, but to keep the focus on Jesus. Therefore, the faith of the Christians in Corinth depended not on Paul but on the power of God.