

## *Welcome to Worship*

Every day the news media publish lots of bad news that is all about the out-of-the-ordinary event and most of them are negative: mass shootings, terrorist attacks, wars, famine, etc. As a result of that we may have felt that we live in the world that God did not make. I am talking about a hungry, sick and hurting world where thousands of people die each day from starvation or disease; still many live in oppressive circumstances, never knowing freedom or dignity or security.

I am talking about a divided world that is fragmented in so many ways. I am talking about a lost world where many people have never heard the good news of Jesus Christ; many have heard but rejected and so continue to live less than full lives. That's the world we live in.

In the gospel reading today, Jesus says that our Christian influence works like salt in food, like a candle in a dark house, like a city that is built on a hill. As we live lives that look and sound like Jesus, we are, bit by bit, helping to shape His world according to His purpose. Remember, the Christian movement began with Jesus and twelve followers. Not a very large or impressive group, was it? But they had a dream of the way life, the way the world should be, could be.

By living above the dominant standards, and by trusting God for the rest, they succeeded in turning the world upside down. We follow in their footsteps and all the resources of God that were available to them are available to us as well.

Jesus did not say, ***"You can be salt, or you should be light"*** but ***"You are the salt of the earth, and you are the light of the world."*** What it means is that you are to shake the salt on a decaying world, and you are to shine the light to a darkened world. We can help make this world more healthy, humane, harmonious and more blessed.

God made a good world. Now He wants us to help Him make it good again. We can do that. By God's grace, we really can do that, Amen.

*... If-Woong*

Today's scripture reading is Matthew 5:13-20.