

April 30, 2023
The Fourth Sunday in Easter
Pastor Matt Duerr

Way Above My Pay Grade-Shine!

Grace mercy and peace be to you savior Jesus Christ, Amen. Last week we began our Easter Sermon Series on “Way Above My Pay Grade.” Those things that we see in scripture that we think are way beyond what we can handle. And for good reason when we take a look at the scriptures that tells us that we are called to be filled with the fullness of God. How can we, as we are humans, be filled with the fullness of God?

Well last week we saw that it takes a person of integrity, a whole person who is a part of the whole body of Christ. That is indeed way above our pay grade, especially then when we are told we are to be the salt of the earth. We are the ones who are to preserve the knowledge of God, who are to preserve the truths of God. We are the ones who are to bring that flavor into this world today. We saw that salt was precious, we are to be the precious things, the precious people of today.

Today we continue with the Sermon on the Mount. Pastor Tim started with the Beatitudes during Lent. Last week we saw the first verse after the Beatitudes. This morning we heard the next three, which start out, “You are the light of the world.” Think about that a moment. You're probably gonna say, ‘wait a second Pastor, I’m a sinner. I’m like King David. I was born in sin and in sin my mother conceived me. And sin makes sinners; well in the Bible were equated with darkness not light. Consider our Psalm this morning in our introit. Psalm 18, where King David talks about being quote “in darkness.” Or in John chapter 3, where Jesus Himself speaks about people having loved the darkness. Ephesians 5 verse 8 says, ‘we are darkness.’ In Ephesians 6:12 Saint Paul writes that we live in this present darkness. A world that is dark because of sin. And by the way, what are we destined for? Well again scripture tells us in second Peter 2 verse 4, we are destined for chains of gloomy darkness all of this of course is because Romans 3:23 The wages of sin is death. So, isn't it because of darkness, sin, our darkness, that God sent Jesus? Isn't it Jesus who said, “I am the light of the world”? Wasn't Jesus sent as Saint Paul writes to the people in Colossians, ‘He was sent to quote “deliver us from the domain of darkness” or first Peter 2 verse 9. He has called us out of darkness and into His glorious light?’ Pastor, as sinners we are darkness, Jesus is the light! He delivers, He calls, if you say that we are the light you are equating us with Jesus and that would be blaspheme. Except for this one little point, Jesus, not pastor Matt Jesus is the one who said, ‘you are the light of the world.’

This takes us back to last week. Since you are the body of Christ and each one of you individually members of it, then you are to be Jesus, you are to be the light. It's not, you are like the light of the world, or you represent the light of the world. It was Jesus, who has a real good concept of language, who said, you are the light of the world. I think you would agree with me, that is way above our pay grade, but like salt, it is possible because of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit who uses our time of worship, who uses our daily devotions, who uses our time of Bible study, who uses our times of fellowship together, who uses the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, who uses us working together in ministry the body of Christ; to get us to the point that we can do beyond what we could even ask or imagine.

So now let's go back to what Jesus says here. 'You are the light of the world.' He continues, and listen carefully to this, 'a city set on a hill cannot be hidden.' We've got a beautiful tie in there to the body of Christ concept. There's one body, many members. Here there's one city of many households. The city on a hill cannot be hidden. And there's one other word here that I would really like you to contemplate for a moment, the word set. It's not a city on a hill that cannot be hidden, it is a city set on a hill. Now why do I bring up that word set? It's on the hill, right? I'm being you know a little ridiculous, looking at one little three letter word.

And that's what I thought oh, about 30 years ago, when I was learning how to do tile. I was redoing the bathroom in our house and my dad had asked me to do some tile work since I was doing it in my house and his house that we had built just a couple of summers before. I had a friend, a parent of one of the children in my class, who was a tile man. So I had him come over because I was having some problems. You see I didn't know the difference between porcelain and ceramic tile; but when he came over I said I need you to teach me how to lay tile. The first thing he said was, 'whoa ,whoa, whoa, let's get something straight here. You don't lay tile, you set tile!' Right right, OK, OK, this is one of those guys who is gonna make a big deal about a little word. I'll just play along he's the master Craftsman, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But then he explained it. He said you set tile because there is intention. You figure out in advance where every tile is going to go, and every cut is going to be made. You don't want to just start off in the corner and start tiling because when you get to the end of a run or to the side, you have to cut little pieces and odd pieces and your grout lines don't all line up, and it looks real odd to have these little pieces over at this end. So usually what you do is you start from the middle of the room, and you mark the exact middle, and you do a row of tile that's gonna go right down the middle of the room so that when you get to the edges of the room you are an equal distance from the wall on both sides so your cuts are exactly the same. And the same with the starting point or the coming into the room and the

going out. Again, you start from the middle, and you lay things out so that your cuts are the exact same. Now the only time you wouldn't do that is if you can have a lot of cabinets and stuff. Then you start from the opposite wall, and you work your way over so you can hide all your cuts behind the cabinets, and no one will see them and everything looks like full tiles. Now when you set those tiles you start with your first tile and then you begin in two directions going in a diagonal so that it keeps your grout lines straight. And now if you have got a shower... and he just continued on and on explaining that when you put tile down it is set because it is clearly thought out in advance, and you were setting them exactly in place so that it looks good.

When you take a look at that, what Jesus is saying is you're like the tile that is set in the body of Christ, each one individually, part of it or a city and each household individually a part of it and God set us on a hill because he's planning on building off of it. You're in a specific place so that you will not be hidden, and your job is to shine wherever you are set. You were put there with a purpose and this purpose, much like salt, comes with a warning. Remember the salt, if the salt loses its saltiness, it's taken out and thrown on the road; first century Roundup. Here's the warning with the light. You don't light a lamp and put it under a basket. Why not? Well first of all, why would you light it to put it under a basket? You wouldn't be able to see it or you wouldn't be able to see because you don't get the light from it. It would be foolish!

Secondly if you light the lamp and you put it under a basket, the basket was a woven thing, it would catch fire and burn. You would have catastrophic results if you intentionally try to hide the light. So, it is with us being called to be the light? If we intentionally say, "Oh no, I'm not shining," the results are catastrophic because we are going against God's purpose.

The Third Point He makes is, "You were set on a stand as a lamp, set with the purpose. Why? For the blessing, it gives light to all in the house so when it's dark it helps you to see. So that when you wake up in the morning and you have got to go to the bathroom, not only do you see the way to the bathroom, you also see every obstacle that is in your way. You can avoid them; you can get to where you're going and avoid the things that would get in your way.

And I might add another blessing which comes from first John 1, verse 7. "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His son, cleanses us from all sin." And there's that word fellowship again. When all the light is together in that city, in the body of Christ,

we all share in those blessings together, we have fellowship with each other, we're doing what we're supposed to and Christ is with us and He cleanses us of all sin.

And Jesus continues... "in the same way," So you have been set on the hill, or you have been set on a stand as a light. In the same way, you've been set there to, I quote, "let your light shine before others." Why? Jesus tells us why. So that, there's a purpose here; so that they may see your good works." Now here comes the big challenge and listen very carefully because we lose this a lot in the church. So that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. It's not 'look at that man, he's just shining. No, we are to shine in such a way that none of the credit goes to us, but all the all the glory goes to God. We are very careful to take the word "I" out of anything we are doing for God. We take our name off of it. That's why, again some people think it's silly, but and I don't say this day to be proud. I don't like to have my name on the sign or anything outside the church. People need to come here because the light is shining not because 'I heard that guy's really good.' No, it's because it's the body of Christ and the body of Christ is shining and everybody just sees the light of Jesus. And they want Jesus.

Jesus is the light; we are the body of Christ. This is the act of the Holy Spirit who transforms us into salt, and light. Who makes us together the body of Christ, the city, so that others see and taste Jesus and give glory to God the Father.

Do you remember that book that was written about 15 years ago, maybe a little bit more, A Purpose Driven Life? I believe it was written by Rick Warren. We do have a purpose driven life, but it's a little bit different than what Rick Warren was picking up on. We have a purpose driven life. We've been set, right where we are, with a purpose to be salt, to be light, to bring Jesus; salvation through Jesus to the world around us. And through that to not take any credit, but give all the glory to God taking none for ourselves. So, shine. Shine for Jesus, shine with Jesus, shine as His body. It's good for you! Yes, it brings us together in fellowship. It's even better for all those around you!

In our Savior's name and to him alone be the glory. Amen.