

When our daughter was four, she asked to be a fairy princess at Halloween. So we searched for and found the perfect twirl worthy sparkly outfit and the just right magic wand, it had a rainbow star on top and we set off to school driving. I glanced in the rear view mirror and was surprised to see a magic wand exactly like our daughters in the middle of the road. And then I realized, oh, it is her magic wand. When I had buckled her in, I had forgotten and left it on the roof. Luckily we were able to go back and retrieve it, unharmed intact. We human beings are forgetful. We need reminders of important things, including the gospel that feeds the soul and illuminates the self within that is divine and loving in everyone in community. Gandhi called Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, the greatest teaching on nonviolence.

Ever so mindful of the world's beauty and violence. Let's steep for a moment. In these encouraging and inspiring words, you are the salt of the earth, but if salt has become insipid, how will it be made? Salt again. It's no longer good for anything then except being thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill can't be hidden and people don't hide an oil lamp under a two gallon basket. They put it on a lampstand where it gives light for everybody in the house. Give light for other people live so they see your compassionate acts and praise your divine father. Now this Greek verb a me here means you are salt and light, not you become it. Jesus is saying you matter. You're powerful. The inci. Here is word play with the Greek morino, sharing roots with our word moronic and meaning simultaneously.

If salt has become foolish, thoughtless, tasteless, crass, and sip it. If salt forgets its salt. In other words, the way we misplace our keys and can't get into the house or leave the magic wand on the car roof. If salt forgets its ability to love itself and others, and if it forgets that we belong to each other and there's a kind reminder I love of our real nature in the wisely humorous image, Jesus chooses here saying, no one puts a lamp under a flammable fruit basket, so to speak. Remember who you are, he's saying, and simply live it out. As we read Matthew five, we remember Howard Thurman taught in Jesus and the disinherited that the religion of Jesus is for those who need profound sucker and strength to live in the present with dignity and creativity. Now, Jesus wasn't a Roman citizen, so if a Roman soldier kicked Jesus into a Palestinian ditch, he couldn't appeal to Caesar and his Thurman writes, Jesus would've then become just another Jew in the ditch.

So we read this scripture tenderly holding in heart everyone who finds themselves today in the ditch of danger, hatred, cruelty, hunger, loneliness, injustice and war from Gaza to Ukraine, to Sudan, to Ia. And we all need the nourishment of good news to not let dire news overload despotism division and moral outrage glut and dictate our inner lives and our outer kind actions. But let's admit in our screen heavy days, it's so easy to forget how potent salt and light are. So let's remember together. Salt ultimately comes from the ocean by the action of light. So Jesus is saying poetically, you all are in essence the ocean. One made by and of love. May we remember Rumi sings in this ocean, in this sea, everything is allowed, everything fits, everything

belongs. Salt is also a stable, non-reactive and highly soluble mineral that the human body needs for basic biological processes like muscle movement, nerve transmission, and more.

May we remember our shared stable divine center and that when by deep listening, we honor the sacred worth of our own and of another's life. Our empathy dissolves in two transformative compassion. Salt also has power to disinfect wounds. May we remember that accepting ourselves and each other both as imperfect and unshakably good, as Greg Boyle reminds, is strong medicine that creates a community of cherished belonging. Small kind acts are never small. Like in the Las Vegas airport. Recently when the man in a southwest uniform helped me clean up an embarrassingly large blue puddle of Gatorade that I'd spilled turning two strangers into laughing friends, never small salt has power also to melt snow and ice from roads and walkways, making clear passage. May we remember our kind divine parent. And may this awareness melt the ness of perfectionism, the illusion of separation and anxiety. Studying our steps together, two, salt has power to preserve food.

When my family and I lived in Seoul and I taught at Soong University, we saw Koreans had used salt sagely for centuries to make kimchi creating a culture for beneficial bacteria to ferment cabbage, extending its delicious shelf life. May we remember compassion helps preserve each other's divine belonging. And a pinch of salt tossed into tollhouse cookie dough as my mother taught me, brings out its sweetness. Sea salt balances out bitterness in a dark chocolate bar enhancing flavor and a pinch of salt releases a broths umami may. We remember letting go of being small ego led gives us power to see and free others flavorful goodness simply by encouraging each other. Now sought in Jesus' day could mean organic fertilizer that creates healthy soil clumping called flocculation. So roots grow better and vegetation flourishes. May we remember good organic fertilizer must be used wisely is rarely applauded, but is essential because healthy growth in community works towards everyone being included, fed, housed, and having healthcare.

Forget yourselves long enough to help others. Paul says in Philippians, and we cannot live without sun. All farmers know this in their very bones. Sunlight makes crops grow and in Jesus' day, indoor lighting wasn't abundant. So small oil lamps were used in indoors, light was precious. This can be harder to recall when many of us no longer grow, but buy food from stores open 24 7 or we can flip a switch and get light. May we remember gratitude for the gift of light outside of us. And as Quaker Rufuss Jones reminds the gift of divine light within us. Obviously salt and light look different on the surface, but they both fulfill their powerful natures by giving away or losing themselves. You are salt and light is a counter-cultural revolutionary statement, rich with psychological and embodied empowering wisdom. May we remember that like the wise self emptying of kenosis being salt and light reminds us that no matter how broken or broken hearted by the world's suffering, we are love and are most ourselves when giving ourselves away.

Embracing griefs salty tears. For as Richard Rohr reminds in tears of things, all things have tears and all things deserve tears. Thurman describes how we can more often remember how the fact is that we are sought and light. This is what he recommends, how good it is to center down, to sit quietly and see oneself pass by. As we listen through all the jangling echoes of our turbulence, there is a sound of another kind, a deeper note, which only the stillness of the heart makes clear at the core of our being, our spirits refreshed. We move back into the traffic of our daily round with eternal peace in our step, how good it is to center down. May we remember we are God's children as Thurman adds in deep river. Whoever knows this is able to transcend the vicissitudes of life, however terrifying and look out on the world with quiet eyes. May you and I see the world and everyone in it with quiet eyes. And may we act in the world with kind hearts being salt and light. Amen.