

24 DECEMBER 2015 – FAMILY SERVICE

READING: Matthew, chapter 5, vv 13 – 16

13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how shall it be made salty? It is from then on good for nothing but to be thrown out and to be trampled underfoot by men.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do men light a candle and put it under a basket, but on a candlestick. And it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

REFLECTION

Tonight I have a special surprise for you... I am sure that you all like “crackers”.

Tonight I am going to tell you the Christmas story with this cracker.

First of all there is the wrapping.....reminding us of the special occasion of Jesus’ birth.

Then there is the “pop” when we pull the cracker reminding us of the angel choir who appeared to the shepherds praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will toward men.”

And then the big surprise when you open it, there is a gift reminding us all of Jesus being the biggest gift from God.

The message of Christmas is that this baby in the manger is God's gift to us because he brings us life in all its fullness, both in this age now and in the eternal life to come. And we obtain that life, not because we deserve it or we earn it, but simply through trusting God. Jesus Christ is the gift we receive through grace.

And then there is a crown reminding us that Jesus is the King of all Kings. Right from the beginning of his life Jesus is called a King. But kings aren't born in cattle sheds, kings don't make friends with fishermen and tax

collectors. So in the Christmas story God is telling us something about what kind of people really matter in the world. It's not just people who live in palaces, and have a lot of money, and are respected by everybody.

So when you wear your crown tomorrow at dinner, remember that Jesus is your heavenly king!

And finally there is the joke. Yes sometimes we need something to let us smile or laugh out loud. And yes we have all the reason in the world to smile because God loves us as we are and the proof is in the manger Jesus. So let's be happy tonight and tomorrow and the day after tomorrow.

But I want to give each one of you a different cracker tonight as you leave the Church....But this cracker will be different ...It will remind you that Jesus brought us LIGHT in the dark world and in doing so made each one of us LIGHT BEARERS. You and I can go and make a difference in the lives of other people.

May you have a "cracker" of a Christmas Day! Amen