



# HORIZON OF HOPE

## WORSHIP TIMES

8:30 A.M. Traditional Service

10:00 A.M. Contemporary Service

In this homily based on Matthew 5:13–16, Father Richard explores what Jesus meant by calling us to be salt and light:

The great temptation of Christianity has always been to think that if we were in control, if we had power, we would “win,” but that’s exactly what Jesus warns us against. In Matthew’s Gospel Jesus tells us to be salt—not the meat, the potatoes, or even the vegetables—just the invisible but very effective salt. Salt is what gives zing and taste to food and Jesus is calling us to be people who give purpose, meaning, and desire to life. If we look at the history of Christianity, whenever we were “in charge,” that’s when we became the most corrupt. Christianity operates best in a resistance position, in a position where we can discern and choose how to be salt, how to be light.

Likewise, the metaphor of light as Jesus uses it here is not controlling or forceful. As Alcoholics Anonymous says, it’s not moving forward by self-promotion, but by attraction. Just set the light on the lampstand and if it’s good, and if it’s real, and if it’s beautiful, people will come. This is very different than what we expect. We basically think we can only move the world by being in control. Yet both of the images that Jesus offers here warn us against wanting to be in control.

That is so contrary to our common sense. We think “If only we had the power, if only we had the majority, we could create the kingdom of God,” but it’s never been true. I know from my years of traveling that when Christians are a minority in a country, and they have to choose and decide to be the salt of the earth, to be light on a lampstand, they make a real difference.

Jesus calls us to give the world taste, meaning, purpose, direction, desire. It’s a humble position, isn’t it? We’d much sooner be in charge. But whenever someone or something has all the power, they mostly misuse power. Jesus warns us against power, because very few people can handle it. Most of us use it for our own aggrandizement, our own promotion and advancement in the ways of the world, which usually means more money and more power.

Either we learn how to be the salt of the earth, a true alternative to the normal motivations and actions of society, or as Jesus put it very clearly, we might as well throw it out and trample it underfoot. We have to find our inner authority through Christ in us; we have to find our purpose in our love of God and neighbor, and actions of mercy and justice. Otherwise, we’re not offering anything that the world doesn’t already have or can’t find in other places.

**Helping Our Community**

- ▶ **Under His Wings Baby Pantry:**  
Located at Under His Wings  
Always needs diapers, Size 3, 4, 5, & 6  
Baby shampoo, lotion and wash.
- ▶ **Under His Wings Thrift Shop:**  
511 Main St.  
Hours: 10-5:00 pm Tues.-Fri  
10-3:00 pm Sat

**Kids Against Hunger Packing Event!**

April 5, 2025 - 9:30AM  
We are looking for 50 people!  
Sign up sheet in the Narthex

**Bible Study**  
**Mondays at 4:00 PM**



**Come join Pastor Jim as he digs deeper in the Bible.  
All are welcome!**

**Women's Evening Bible Study**  
**Thursday, March 6th at 6:00**  
**Marilyn Perry's home**

**Bible Study at Bailey Pointe**  
**First Thursday of the Month**  
**March 6, 2024—1:00 PM**

**Prayer Time with Pastor**  
**Tuesdays 10:00-10:30 AM**

**COUNCIL NOTES**

**HOSANNA COUNCIL MEMBERS**

2024-2025	
Sheri Lyons—President	402-657-7599
Marilyn Perry—Vice Pres.	319-850-2655
Leigh LaRosa <b>leighlarosa3@gmail.com</b>	402-297-6795
Bob Wills	402-298-7442
Betsy Richards—Sec. <b>read7pjh@aol.com</b>	402-658-4836
Brynn Jobman	402-239-0972
Roxanne White roxwhite@cox.net	402-292-6632
Jenni Dasovic - Financial Secretary	402-297-1620
April Rishel - Treasurer	

*We welcome all people to worship God  
by offering our lives in daily witness  
to the love of Jesus Christ.*

**Welcome Ministry**  
Marilyn and Brynn

**Worship Ministry**  
Leigh and Bob

**Witness Ministry**  
Betsy and Roxanne

*YOU are always welcome to attend the meeting of  
our Council. Check with the church office for  
meeting details!*

	Feb 2	Feb 9	Feb 16	Feb 23	
<b>General</b>	1190	1845	1715	n/a	
<b>Benevolence</b>	55	55	0	n/a	

**Your Financial Gifts...**

Please consider mailing your commitment to the church at  
P.O. Box 301,  
Plattsmouth, NE 68048. Thank You!

Our Church continues to be grateful for all who faithfully support the ongoing life  
and ministry operating costs of Hosanna.  
You make a difference!

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Forgiving God,

Too often we take your forgiveness for granted. Too often we cling to our sin, believing that it is our right to harbor resentments and hatred. Be merciful to us, and show us the depth of healing that is offered when you forgive, for the sake of the one who recognized total surrender to forgiveness and offered it willingly, Jesus Christ our healer.

Amen.

## ***God with us – Changes everything – The greater the Forgiveness the greater the Love***

The greater the forgiveness, the greater the love. We can be "Much Love" Christians because we are "Much Forgiven" Christians. Let's see it play out in our text today.

### **Luke 7:36-50 (NIV)**

*<sup>36</sup> When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. <sup>37</sup> A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. <sup>38</sup> As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.*

The setting is a formal banquet, where the guests of honor would recline gracefully on couches -- an environment designed specifically for important figures to offer lectures and insights on moral and theological issues. The evident strain in the relationship between Jesus and the Pharisees did not prevent a Pharisee, Simon, from inviting Jesus to be his special guest at this public meal. But this proper, refined atmosphere is interrupted by the surprising entrance of a wholly inappropriate figure -- a woman "who was a sinner".

Her behavior is as unexpected and outlandish as is her presence. Although she herself does not speak throughout this entire pericope, her actions and gestures communicate volumes. She is obviously an uninvited guest, although the generally public nature of such formal banquets allowed for the presence of others than the invited diners. Luke identifies her as one "who lived a sinful life" -- a description which, coupled with her unescorted arrival and formally immodest behavior, certainly suggests she was a prostitute.

She is not financially destitute. She brings with her a costly "alabaster jar of ointment." Her behavior suggests she has faced some deep emotional troubles, however, for at the sight of Jesus she begins to weep -- bathing his feet, in fact, with her tears. She follows this emotional display by then drying Jesus' feet with her hair, while continuing to apply tears and now the ointment in liberal quantities.

*<sup>39</sup> When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."*

By simply touching Jesus, this woman has ritually defiled him whether or not she was a prostitute. She is present where she ought not be. She has uncovered her hair in public. She has acted on her own outside any family connections -- all shameful, impure, scandalous behaviors for a first-century Jewish woman. Jesus' host responds with a typical party-line judgment upon both this woman and Jesus himself. By allowing the woman to touch him or by failing to recognize the woman's sinfulness, Simon feels Jesus has seemed to fail as a prophet.

*<sup>40</sup> Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. <sup>41</sup> "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup> Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" <sup>43</sup> Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said.*

Jesus first turns to Simon the Pharisee. In perfect keeping with the environment his host has provided, Jesus offers a parable as a means of corrective teaching. The parable of the canceled debts leads Simon and us to conclude that the greater the debt forgiven the more love the debtor will feel towards the creditor. Hmmm... what do you think???

*<sup>44</sup> Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. <sup>45</sup> You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. <sup>46</sup> You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. <sup>47</sup> Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." <sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."*

Just as we never hear this woman's voice, we never hear Simon's response when Jesus applies his parable of the creditor and the debtors to the situation before them. Simon, the representative Pharisee, is not given a chance to voice either a forgiving view of this woman or a judgment against her. Instead, Jesus now turns from his object lesson with Simon (his lack of hospitality) back to the subject herself--the repentant woman. First, Jesus announces "Your sins are forgiven" -- a proclamation that flaunts Simon's pharisaic conclusion that Jesus could not be a prophet, could not be THE looked-for Messiah. By granting forgiveness to this woman, Jesus is stepping up to the messianic plate and revealing the power in his swing.

*<sup>49</sup> The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" <sup>50</sup> Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."*

Jesus' surprising words of forgiveness prompt other guests to ask the rhetorical question, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" The question of Jesus' identity is a recurring theme in Luke (cf. 5:20-23; 9:20-22, 35). The question, however, will not be formally answered in today's text. Instead, Jesus keeps his focus on the woman and once again offers her the assurance of forgiveness. Jesus uses words later echoed by late first-century Christians after baptism -- "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." This final pronouncement reveals

that though she has never spoken a word in this entire episode, this woman's actions have clearly articulated her faith for all to see.

Yet, the beauty of the forgiven life is not that our love is an obligatory love, any more than the love of this woman anointing the feet of Jesus was duty-driven. It is a love which is naturally elicited by God's forgiveness. The mark of forgiven persons is their love for God and their fellow human beings. Do you agree?? God even gives us love to love others!

You can't love someone? You haven't experienced God's forgiveness. You can't love your coworker, your neighbor, a family member, the marginalized of our society, those who are different from you? You need to experience your forgiveness; not know you're forgiven, but experience that forgiveness. I wonder how often we say – I'm not as much as a sinner as that person. I remember my mom telling me "if you are pointing to a person, notice that three of your fingers are pointing back at you". Yikes – remember our memory verse?

We will hear Jesus' saying, "To whom much is given, much is required." (Luke 12:48). We need to know by heart Jesus' saying, "To whom much is forgiven, much love is required." By the love we return to God and the love we show to others, we demonstrate our own forgiveness.

It's time to break out the alabaster jar of ointment and begin to pour the oil of love upon those around you. You can be, should be, and will be, a MUCH LOVE person, because you are a much-forgiven person. Thank you, Lord for your forgiveness.

**Let us Pray:** Father, we thank you for the gift of your son. We thank you that you make your presence. We thank you for your compassion, grace and love. Help us to be followers of Jesus. Lord, through your Spirit give us eyes to see with your compassion and ears to hear your will and a heart willing to follow your will in our lives. Help us be the children you want us to be. Help us to share the Good News. Help us to love you and love others. We can do all this through you Lord, who gives us strength. Praise and blessing to you – in Jesus' name we pray, and all God's children said.... **Amen.**

**BLESSING: Sending message from St. Teresa of Avila**

**"Christ has no body now, but ours. No hands, no feet on earth, but ours. Ours are the eyes through which Christ looks compassion into the world. Ours are the feet with which Christ walks to do good. Ours are the hands with which Christ blesses the world." † AMEN.**

**Verse of the Month**

***<sup>37</sup> "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Luke 6:37 (NIV)***

Video for this Sunday is "Forgiveness" by Matthew West

**Easter and Lenten Service Schedule**

**Wednesday March 5  
Ash Wednesday  
Service at 6:30 PM**

**Midweek Lenten Meal and service will be at Christ Lutheran Church.**

Meal will be at 6pm with Holden evening service and special Synod speakers starting at 7pm. This is a great way to meet some Nebraska Synod staff and learn what they are doing and a great chance to meet our neighbors at Christ Lutheran Church.

- March 12** - John Fredricks - Lutheran Campus Ministry
- March 19** - David Pinkston – Seeking the Spirit Within
- March 26** - Jacob Spilke – Camp Carol Joy Holling
- April 2** - Greg Burger – Parish Ministry
- April 9** - Jens Acamo – Lutheran Family Services

Christ Lutheran Church  
15616 84th St (HWY 66)  
Louisville NE 68037

**Thursday, April 17  
Maundy Thursday Service  
6:30 PM**

**Friday, April 18  
Good Friday Service  
6:30 PM**



**Easter Sunday**

**April 20  
Sunrise Service 7:00 AM**

**Breakfast for all**

**Traditional Service 8:30 AM**

**Contemporary Service 10:00 AM**

**There will be no Kid's Church on Easter Sunday**

**Please pray for:**

Bertha Black  
Mary Braatz  
Nadine Burson  
Donna Clark  
Nancy Conley  
Mason Durov  
Katie G. and family  
Russ Frye  
Jan Gehrig  
Dave Greer  
Barrett Hermann  
Logan Hodila  
Jason Knott  
Bonnie Kral  
Hayden Lavin

Rachel Mathew  
Randy Ness  
Josie Oseka  
Rich Peters  
Kay Rishel  
Juan Rodriguez  
Robin Roeder  
Emily Ryan  
Nick Shafer  
Moxin Smith  
Les Thornton  
Dan & Kathy Todd  
Jason, Rowan, Tate,  
Dawson, Joel

Please let the office know of changes to the prayer lists so that we can keep everything current. Thanks!

**Prayer for those serving in the military and law enforcement:**

Justin Bartlett, Marines  
Jason Black, Law Enforcement  
Joshua Black, Law Enforcement  
Meshack Casey, Army  
Cory Clines, Air Force  
Steve Durov, Law Enforcement  
Alex Houchin, Navy  
Sean Gardner, Law Enforcement  
Kyle Hefner, Air Force  
Regan Hefner, Air Force  
Mason Jensen, Navy  
Rachel Mildenhall, Marines  
Scott Nelson, Army  
Tyler Nielson, Navy  
Nick Richards, Law Enforcement  
Steven Richards, Army  
Travis Roeder, Air Force  
Brent Wiese, Army  
Craig Wylie, Law Enforcement



**Attendance February 2025**

Feb 2	Feb 9	Feb 16	Feb 23
96	89	62	n/a

Hosanna Lutheran Church  
P.O. Box 301  
Plattsmouth, NE 68048  
(402) 296-2662

Ministers:  
All Members

Pastor:  
Jim Spanjers 616-7909  
E-mail:  
hl\_pastor@hosannaplattsmouth.com

Council President: Sheri Lyons

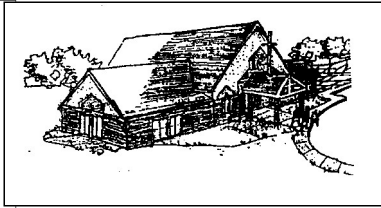
Director of Under His Wings  
Baby Pantry and Thrift Shop:  
Claudia Wylie 802-7115

Church Office:  
Diana Lindensmith 296-2662

E-Mail:  
[office-admin@hosannaplattsmouth.com](mailto:office-admin@hosannaplattsmouth.com)

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On the Web:  
[www.HosannaPlattsmouth.com](http://www.HosannaPlattsmouth.com)



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



*We welcome all people to worship God by offering our lives  
in daily witness to the love of Jesus Christ.*

**Kids Against Hunger Food Packing Event!!  
April 5th at 9:30— Laurie Voss can answer your questions!**

**Ash Wednesday  
March 5, 2025—6:30 PM**

**Men's Fellowship Brunch  
Wednesday, March 19th at 10:30 AM**

**Women's Evening Bible Study  
March 6, 2025-6:00 PM at Marilyn Perry's home**

**Women's Daytime Bible Study  
Thursday March 6 at 1:00 PM at Bailey Pointe Assisted Living**

**Prayer Time  
Tuesday mornings from 10:00-10:30**

**Bible Study  
Mondays at 4:00 PM**

