**Ann Graham
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Sermon Illustration**

**“Salt and Light, Leavening and Love”**

**Matthew 5:13-16 (NIV)**

**13“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.**

**14“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**

Today’s **Gospel lesson is about salt and light.** With respect to salt, as avid cook I say, just a little is essential – but too much is too much. Jesus has another **parable in Matthew about leaven, hidden in bread dough**, again a small amount unnoticeable, but essential to making delicious bread.

So how do we know how to use the gifts we are given, in the right amounts and combinations to do what God asks: **Be the salt of the earth. Be the light of the world. ??**

Most of you know that I am currently studying at the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, with three years down and one to go. As you may assume, **I am listening for the voice of God** regarding my life and my call to serve in ministry.

One night recently, after dinner, I was putting food back in the refrigerator, when I heard a **tiny cry from within the refrigerator.** I searched around and found nothing that I could identify as the source of this little whining sound.

About **20 seconds later**, however, I heard it again. Making my usual **leap to the worst case scenario**, I thought, “Oh, great! Now there’s something wrong with the fridge and we’re probably going to have to replace it. That’s thousands of dollars.”

I tried all the door seals to see if maybe it could just be a leak. No luck with that – and then, I heard the sound again.

**I called my husband over** to see if he could hear it, too. He did not. What was I thinking? He’s a little hard of hearing anyway. “Oh, well,” I said. **“Let’s just go to bed.”**

Later the next day, **my husband told me that he heard the sound**, just a teeny tiny moan. **Not ready to call ghostbusters**, I **started taking things out of the fridge**. And there was the **culprit: A small Tupperware container of sourdough starter.** The fermentation was causing just a little air to escape at irregular intervals.

I was **somewhat disappointed not to hear the voice of God in my refrigerator**, but I think we **can findthe voice of God here in this space, here in this scripture.**

We have also been studying the writings of St. Teresa of Avila. Her lovely poem/prayer provides both light and warmth for us:

Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
With patience all things are possible.
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.