

For the Love of an Imperative Verb

Matthew 5:13-20

The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, Year A, RCL

¹³"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, **let** your light **shine** [λαμψάτω, **lampsátō**] before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

¹⁷"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until earth and heaven pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." [NRSV⁸⁹]

5:16

λαμψάτω, **lampsátō**; *vb*: *aor act imperative 3rd pers sg* from λάμπω:

translations: **let . . . shine** [NRSV⁸⁹, ESV, NGEINT, NIV¹¹, NKJV, NRSVue; Albright & Mann, Filson], **must shine** [NAB, NJB], **alumbre** [IAdNT]

Filson: "The light . . . of good works must shine out so that men see it and thereby are led, not to praise the one who does the good deeds, but to praise the Father in heaven whom it is the disciple's single and constant purpose to honour and serve." [*The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 86.]

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