I just finished a book called “All the Light **We** Cannot See,”

...it takes place in Europe during WWII and centers on the lives of two children,

a blind girl who resides in what becomes occupied **France**…

and a brilliant young boy in a **German** orphanage.

The author, Anthony Doerr dedicates every other chapter to each ...describing in detail their personal lives and the impact of war.

He also writes in a non- sequential manner. It’s really two stories slowly weaving into one.

As he alternates between one life then the other he interjects sneak previews.

First of all the book begins implicating “a spoiler alert”…

He sets the stage for what looks like the last act.

But, he shares sparingly --just enough so that we want more.

Beginning with Aug 1944, Doerr then takes us back to 1934 and then forwards to 1940 and 1944 then back again.

Each chapter contains mini chapters as he progresses through the lives of the two children.

Normally this kind of disorder would drive me crazy but the author has an incredible way of holding the reader’s attention.

Every mini chapter, which is only a page or three, comes alive, sometimes beautifully and other times it is too graphic and realistic.

Doerr paints *such* descriptive scenes you’d think you were sitting in a *theater* watching a play.

:You can **hear** waves of the ocean pounding against the shore, song birds, a crackling radio ...and the cannons of war.

:You can **feel** the ocean breeze, the slimy snails, falling ceiling panels and… coldness.

:You can **smell** her father’s pipe, the bakery but also the remnants of death.

The book becomes all too real in the shadows of war, yet there is a **whisper of hope**

 throughout this recent Pulitzer Prize winning book.

As I thought about the gospel reading for today I realized how similar the Bible is to this book

...in its timeline and representation.

The Bible is put together slightly out of order, which doesn’t diminish the meaning or authenticity of the book, but leaves you wanting more.

The prophets of the Old Testament offer sneak previews; a Savior for the world...

 preceded by the people who carry this hope through the generations like Abraham, Noah, and Moses.

Every chapter in every book of the Bible is written in detail -such that you feel as if you are there on stage with them.

God breathed into scriptures so that every detail is painted in our hearts and minds:

--from the barren wilderness, to the turbulent waters,

to the people of many different walks of life ....to Christ himself.

:With some imagination we can **smell** the sea, the fish **and** the fishermen…

:We can **feel** the desert dryness, the battering storms and the softness of Jesus’ robe as he passes by.

:We can **see** Jesus walking the long dusty trails, with stick in hand, stopping to hold little children and touch the deaf, mute, and blind.

:We can **see** the look of compassion as well as the anguish…as He turns toward Jerusalem.

(pause)

:We can **hear** the love in His voice as He responds to arrogant leaders,

 the hungry masses & the forgotten poor…

just as we can **hear** the sound of the lost sheep and the madness of the crowd screaming “Crucify Him!!!”

We are **there** with Jesus and the disciples on top of the mountain and in the Garden of Gethsemane…from the valley of death to the hill where 3 wooden crosses stand.

(pause)

We know that Jesus walked a cruel and violent path and that He *rose* from those ashes of death.

We **believe** Jesus overcame death and the devil.

We know that - -we get that!

We are, after all, **Post Easter** people,

...which is why the message today is so important for us to hear.

Jesus warns us about being lethargic, salt-less, without flavor.

And Though we strive to be salt-worthy and relevant we can become weary and empty.

You know, Salt doesn’t *really* lose its flavor but it can become impure and lose its value…

just as we can be tainted by the influences of this world …and lose our effectiveness.

Like the characters in the book we touch the lives of thousands along the way. Our paths cross with one another as we twist and turn through life.

...whether it’s for a long period or only for a moment, we have a chance to make a difference…

to have an impact on someone else’s life – both good and bad.

And we take on one another’s stories! We are shaped by those whom we meet…and they by us.

Before we come to the last chapter in *our* lives, we should know that

every moment has been important;

that our stories need to be told and celebrated.

We cannot do it on our own, though, as Paul tells us. But the Holy Spirit promises to work in and through us to reveal God’s will.

Martin Luther explained it well in the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed,

“I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him;

 but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.”

(Pause)

There is much we cannot see,

we are in the dark as surely as the little girl.

We just have to have faith, hope, and courage and truly truly trust God.

This tragic tale of two young lives is bound together by **perseverance**.

These children, whose destinies appear bleak from the very beginning *never* **give** **up!**

They could have “hid their light of vocation, skill, and opportunity…[but they didn’t]”

Their courage and faith allowed them to overcome fear and consequences.

With limited resources they were capable of being salt to others and bring light into a very dark world.

(Pause)

We can be that light - we have the ability to spice up the world around us.

And to be the kind of light we want to be,

not hidden, but rather standing

... to on top of the world

 reflecting Gods love.

We do this by visiting God ...continually throughout the day.

We do this when we come here to be filled with the Word,

to be vulnerable in **worship**

through ......music and prayer

…**where** we are renewed and refreshed.

It doesn’t matter if we read the Bible from cover to cover or the end before the beginning - or anywhere in between.

God will give us comforting words and encouragement to make us salty again…

God gives us substance…so that we can bring out the best in others.

S&S writes, “Letting our lights shine brightens the world so that others may see more clearly and give glory to God.”

And In the words of Anthony Doerr, **“Open your eyes and see what you can with them .**...before they close forever.” Amen.