

Salt & Light (Part 2: Salt)

Matt. 5:13-16 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.”

How Does Salt Impact the World?

- Salt was a very valuable substance in Bible times.
- For salt to be effective, it must **interact** with another substance by first coming in **contact** with that substance.

Salt as a Purifier (Antiseptic)

- Stings at first to open wound.
- Salt **cleanses**, it refines, kill **germs**.
- Salt is **white**, therefore symbolizes purity.
- Produces **righteousness** and **purity**.
- Remove the **corrosion** of sin.
- God's truth that is **hard** for people to accept.
- God's truth causes people to be **unsettled** – feel **guilt** of sin.

Salt as a Flavor Enhancer (Seasoning Agent)

- It **improves** the taste of food.
 - Salt **neutralizes** acid or bitterness.
 - We **bring out the best** in people (e.g. absence of bad language).
 - Fosters **wholesome** relations.
 - We produce **fruit** that **draw** people to God.
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*Colossians 4:6 ⁶ Let your speech always be **gracious, seasoned with salt**, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*

Salt as a Preservative

- It gives food an **improved** length of life.
- **Restrains evil** in the world. Church prevents the world from rushing headlong toward ungodliness.
- Defuses angry, hostility, ...
- Walking into a room – people on **best** behavior – noticeable reduction in **foul** language – raises **moral** standard.

Salt Other Uses

- Salt makes people **thirsty**.
 - Salt makes people **thirsty** for what is **right** and ultimately draws people to God.
- Salt **thaws** ice.
 - Salt helps soften the **hard hearts** of people and be open to God.

- Salt acts as a **fertilizer** and make things easier to **grow**.
 - Encourages spiritual **awareness** and **growth** in people.

Caution: Salt, not Sugar:

- Sugar makes **everything** taste good / feel good.
- Christians are not sugar, but salt.
- We don't **mask** or **sugar-coat** evil, we **expose** it.

How Does Salt Lose Its Saltiness?

- Most valuable substance → most worthless substance (even dangerous)
- Become contaminated
 - Salt becomes **contaminated** by mixing with impurities.
 - For Christians, our salt can be contaminated by the **impurities of the world**.
 - Because of our **sin nature**, we must be on **guard** to protect our Christlikeness
 - Don't **practice** spiritual disciplines (weaker).
 - Don't **protect** ourselves with the armor of God
 - These are **not optional**.
- Becomes diluted
 - When salt is exposed to condensation or rain water, the sodium chloride could be dissolved and diluted.
 - As Christians we become diluted by
 - **busyness** (lack of focus), spread thin
 - **preoccupation** with things that don't really matter (e.g. materialism)
 - ... **distractions**
- Rhetorical Question: Contaminated, diluted salt CANNOT be made salty again.

Centeredness

- For the Christian, centeredness is the ability to **focus our lives** on God's truths and **live confidently** in God's truths.
- Some of the ways we **shine** our light and **spread** our salt.

3 - [Being] Kingdom-Centered

Rooted in the **RULE** of God, and
the Pursuit of **GOD'S AUTHORITY** and
modeling that **God's ways are best**

- In John 17:14-19, Jesus teaches that we live **IN** this world but are not **OF** the world (aliens).
- Living in the **Kingdom of God** means
 - Acknowledging that **God's ways are best** by ...
 - living under the **authority of God** and according to **kingdom principles**
- Living in the Kingdom is totally **counter-culture**, radical. We live **differently** than the world lives.

- **Self-Glorification** - We want to glorify God, not ourselves.
- **Materialism** – We want to be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us, Put our resource “in play”.
- **Relativism** - We believe and live our lives according to God’s absolute moral law of right and wrong.
- **Judgementalism** – We are on the “log in our own eye” and let God “remove the speck” in someone else’s eye.
- When we live according to kingdom principles, we **produce fruits** of the Spirit (joy, peace, patience) - **smells sweet** - **things the world desperately wants**.

4 – [Being] People-Centered

Rooted in the **LOVE** of God, and
the Pursuit of **GREAT COMMISSION**, and
modeling unconditional **LOVE & GRACE**

Making Contact

- Our lives as Christians are a **showcase** for the **power of God**.
- It’s all about **engaging** or **making contact** with people.
- Pippert: Out of the Salt Shaker and Into the World (1979), Coined “Lifestyle Evangelism”
 - It’s about getting the salt of **out** the salt shaker.
- Being people-centered is about **cultivating caring** and **trusting** relationships with people.
 - It’s about putting people **first**.
 - It’s about a **commitment** to spend **quality** time with people.
 - It’s about being **winsome** without compromising truth.
 - It’s about **listening** to people.
 - It’s about **knowing** people; and allow people to **know** us.
- Ultimately, these relationships give us the **credibility** to **speak into people’s lives**.
- HS gives us **insight** into how to **spread** our salt in every circumstance.
 - We need to **discern** each **circumstance**.
 - We don't salt something **without tasting** it first.
 - Need to **listen** first then **ask** God how to respond.
- Rebecca Pippert:
 - We don’t want to come across as **condemning** or **self-righteous** ... “you should ...”,
 - “It’s about **EXPOSING** our faith **TO** others, not **IMPOSING** our faith **ON** others. “

Authenticity

- As we live authentically, people **identify** with us because they experience the **same struggles**.
- They see God **at work** in our lives and **marvel**.
- They **identify** with us and realize God can work in **their** lives.

Transparency

- Essentially, we **get out of the way** and let people observe the **power of God** at work in our lives.

*My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the **spirit's power**. 1 Cor 2:4*

- The more **invisible** or **transparent** we become, the more **visible** God becomes.
 - We want people to see **through** us and see **God's power**.
 - Showbread/candlestick: We want to **point** people to God and give God all the **credit**.
- Because the **focus** is on God's power, people begin to understand the **life-giving message** of the **Gospel** and the **transformative power** of the HS.

Jesus' Exhortation

***Matthew 9:10-13**¹⁰ And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹ And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"*

¹² But when Jesus heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

***Luke 7:34**³⁴ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'*

- The Pharisees are **accusing** Jesus of not **separating** himself from sinners.
- Jesus came to serve the "sick".
- Today, we may be **accused** of spending **too much time** with sinners.

Summary

- Idiom: "Actions speak louder than words." "We are seen before we are heard."
- It's about **being** the **right person**.
- If you are the **right person**, we will **do** the right thing and we will **say** the right thing.
- We **ARE** light. God the HS "radiates" the light of God **within** us to **draw** people to himself.
- We **ARE** salt. We **engage** with people to live effectively as salt.