

“Are You Salt?”

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How valuable is salt? 40 million tons are required each year to fill our needs. Homer called it “*divine*”. Plato called it a “*substance dear to the gods.*” Shakespeare mentioned salt 17 times in his plays. Perhaps Leonard da Vinci wanted to send a subtle message about purity lost when he painted “*The Last Supper.*” In that painting, an overturned salt shaker is conspicuously placed by Judas.

In ancient Greece, a far-flung trade involving the exchange of salt for slaves gave rise to the expression, “*he’s not worth his salt.*” Special salt rations were given to Roman soldiers and known as “*Solarium Argentums*” the forerunner of the English word “*salary.*” Thousands of Napoleon’s troops died during his retreat from Moscow because their wounds would not heal because their bodies lacked salt.

The human body contains about 4oz. of salt. Without enough of it, muscles won’t contract, blood won’t circulate, food won’t digest and the heart won’t beat. Without a doubt, salt is the essence of life! God’s given you a new nature that makes you be as Jesus calls you, “**You are the salt of the earth.**”

So if we’re to be the ‘salt of the earth’, **What’s a salty Christian? How do we serve God** as salty Christians? Think of that saltshaker on your dinner table or counter. If the little white kernels remain inside that shaker, can they do their job as salt? No way! Salt’s got to come in contact with something to do the job God designed it to do!

We’re here today to learn from His Word and see how we may be better equipped to worship God when we’re out of this building and are dispersed among other people. God wants to sprinkle us all over Carson City, Minden, Gardnerville, and Tahoe to make a difference in the lives of others!

But sometimes our human nature gets in the way and sin overtakes us. Open to Mark 9. This was the situation at the beginning of the Gospel. Last week the disciples argued about who was the greatest, and now are having trouble with someone else casting out demons.

Verses 38-40, “*John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. For the one who is not against us is for us.”*”

Humble service pleases God, but the disciples missed it! They wanted to call the shots on who could or could not do something for God. As Jesus said, it’s not our place to stop someone who’s doing something in His name. Jesus is telling the disciples and us, **Put Aside all Jealousy and Pride.**

Sinful pride and jealousy can detract from God’s grace. God’s grace comes to us freely and without our merit. It’s not that we’ve decided to believe in God by our own will, it’s God alone Who’s called us out of darkness into light. We didn’t choose Him but God first chose us. Faith puts aside all jealousy and pride. Listen to I Corinthians 12:3, “*Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.*”

Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient even to death on a cross. Our world doesn't give very much credit to those who live humble lives of service. But this is exactly what it means to have salt in us. We need to put aside our own selfish pride to better serve God by helping those around us.

We need to Be Filled with the Word of God. Verses 42-47, *“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell.”*

Jesus now reminds the disciples of the seriousness of sin. *“Little ones”* means children and those who are infants in the Christian faith. Sin is serious. Your hand, foot, and eye can all lead you to sin. The source of all sin begins in the heart. The salt of God's Word that stings us is the Law.

None of us like to hear that we're sinners. We don't want to be reminded of our shortcomings that deserve eternal punishment. Hell is a real place reserved for those who reject God. There the soul doesn't die, and the fire isn't put out!

Salty Christians must keep the world fresh! Just as salt can preserve things, we as salty Christians need to preserve the lives of those around us! Jesus is serious about the kind of life you lead. He said in verse 42, it would be better for us to be thrown into the ocean with a large millstone hung around our head than to lead others to sin. So are you setting a Christian example for others to follow?

“You are the salt of the earth.” You're to do these things even though the rest of the world isn't! **Jesus wants our Salty Nature to be Evident to Everyone!** He made us salt, people with a new nature, and people with a special assignment to uphold God's honor in all we say, think, and do. That's your mission, to bring others to Jesus Christ!

You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, in a world that continually grows darker! Rejoice in the faith that dwells in your heart and is seen in your life! Be Salt!