



The Salt of the Earth

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Matthew 5:13

You are the salt of the earth. But suppose the salt loses its saltiness. How can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything. It will be thrown out. People will walk all over it. - Matthew 5:13

Jesus compares His followers to salt. That seems like a very strange comparison! This week, examine what that means and how we can use our "saltiness" to point others to Jesus, the living water. Pray each day to talk to God about what you are learning.



Day #1: Preserving

Before people had refrigerators, they had to put lots of salt on their raw meat to keep it from spoiling. This seems odd to us, but it was everyday life for the people in Jesus' time. Spoiled meat has an awful smell! And if someone were to eat meat that was spoiled, they would get very, very sick.

God made a beautiful world for us to live in, but man's sin has spoiled the world. Genesis 6:12 says, *"God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways."*

Christians serve as the salt, the preserver, of the earth when we do things that are pleasing to God. When we stand up for things that are right and stand against things that are evil, we help preserve our world. Historically, Christians have brought about change and healing in corrupt society. The prayers and actions of Christians have stopped many types of evil activity in the world, such as slavery, discrimination and communism.

Paul told his young friend Timothy: *"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. . . Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."*
- 1 Timothy 4:12,16 (NIV)

No matter how old you are, you can be the salt in the world you live in. Moms and Dads may write letters to politicians to change laws that are not Godly. But what can you do? Even though you are young, there is a lot you can do. When you are at a playground and you notice someone being unkind to a child, you can be the one who is nice to him or her. When you hear other kids using bad words, you can be the one who does not say them. Can you think of times you can stand against things that

Day #1 continued:

are wrong? Just like Paul told Timothy, even though you are young, people are watching you! You can be the example that helps preserve your world.

Day #2: Tasty

Can you *imagine* a world with no salt? There would be no zing on your french fries, no zest to your pretzels. Food would be very bland. In fact, it is hard to find even one recipe that does not call for some salt. Salt gives food more flavor. In some recipes, the salt cannot be tasted, but salt brings out the flavor of the other ingredients.

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. - Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV)

The Bible tells us to season our speech with salt. Our words should be wholesome and bring out the best in other people. Ephesians 4:29 says, *"Don't let any evil talk come out of your mouths. Say only what will help to build others up and meet their needs. Then what you say will help those who listen."* Godliness and God's Word should be a part of our conversations.

Can you think of a time when you did not season your words with the salt of Godliness? Unfortunately, this happens very often in our own families. Pray and ask God to stop you before you say anything unkind. Ask God to give you words to speak that will encourage the people around you so that they will be drawn to Him.

Day #3: Useless

Why would Jesus mention salt that has no taste? This seems very strange to us because most of us have never seen tasteless salt.

The salt from around the Dead Sea was often mixed with other substances. Because of the mix of chemicals, it looked like salt but did not taste or preserve like salt. It was no longer pure and was no longer able to do what it was created to do. Jesus mentions this worthless salt because the same thing can happen in our lives. If we allow the world's values to become a part of our life, our heart will no longer be pure. If we let the world (tv, movies, ungodly friends) mold us, we can't be an effective "preserver" of the world. And we will not be able to impact others in a godly way.

Don't live any longer the way this world lives. Let your way of thinking be completely changed. Then you will be able to test what God wants for you. And you will agree that what he wants is right. His plan is good and pleasing and perfect. - Romans 12:2

Is there anything that you are allowing to mix into your life that is keeping your heart from being pure? Talk with your parents about it. Sometimes it is hard for us to see for ourselves. Pray and ask God to help you keep a pure heart so that you can do what God created you to do.

Day #4: Thirsty

Pretend you are going to the movies. You want to order a big bucket of popcorn. And what do you have to order with it? A giant drink! Why? Because salty food makes you thirsty. The more salt you eat, the more thirsty you'll be. Salt makes your body crave water.



Jesus answered, "All who drink this [regular] water will be thirsty again. But anyone who drinks the water I give him will never be thirsty. In fact, the water I give him will become a spring of water in him. It will flow up into eternal life." - John 4:13-14

When people see that our lives are different ("salty") because of our faith in Jesus, they will want to know more about the One we follow.

Day #4 continued:

People who do not follow God know that something is missing in their lives. They will be thirsty for what we have when they see that we stand against things that are wrong and when they see the joy we have deep down inside.

Do you know someone whose walk with Jesus is very deep? Does it make you want to get closer to God yourself? Are you a person whose walk with Jesus is strong enough for others to see? Pray and ask God to make your walk with Him an example that will make other people thirsty for Him.

Day #5: Unique

With your parent's permission, get the salt shaker from your kitchen. Sprinkle a little in your hand. Now **taste** it.

Sugar is sweet. Lemons are sour. Can you describe the taste of salt? Well, it is "salty." There is no other word to describe it. It is different from every other taste. It is unique with a special purpose. When Jesus says we should be like salt, He is simply calling us to live out what He has already made us to be - unique beings with a special purpose. When we choose to put our trust in Him, He makes us a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17). We as Christians have the unique characteristics that are shared by all other Christians. How do we know what these are? Jesus describes our new characteristics in the verses right before the salt parable.

Get out your Bible and read Matthew 5:3-12.

A Christian knows he needs God, is sad about the things that make God sad (sin and evil), is humble, wants to read the Bible and spend time in prayer, does not judge others, loves God with his whole heart and he tries to make peace between people. Sometimes he will be persecuted for being a Christian but he knows he will be rewarded in heaven. People with these characteristics are happy and are so very useful to those around them. If you have put your trust in Christ, thank God for the new creation He has made you. Ask for His help in living your life the way He created you to live it - unique and full of purpose.