

Salty Souls

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

Introduction: Matt. 5:13

- A. When Jesus calls us salt, He reminds us that we have the opportunity and the responsibility to be an influence in the world.
 - 1. This follows the Beatitudes which if those qualities are in every Christian, we would take the world by storm for the Lord. That speaks to the power of Christian influence
 - 2. Animals make paths to salt licks - sought it out
 - a. Trade route always included a salt source as a critical part of the trade - a valuable commodity
 - b. Roman soldiers were paid in salt, a universal medium of exchange in the Empire - a trustworthy standard
 - c. Allowed ancient cultures to preserve food, enabling life and culture to spread around the world - promotes growth
 - d. A precise amount must always present in our bodies where significant deviations can result in sickness or death - vital to life
 - e. Is used worldwide as the number one condiment to enhance the taste of food - is universally desired and appreciated

I. SALT IN SCRIPTURE

- A. A symbol of a binding covenant - Lev. 2:13
- B. A healing and cleansing aid - 2Kings 2:20-21
- C. An aid to the appetite - Job 6:6
- D. A preserving influence - Luke 14:34-35
 - 1. "Kalos - good literally or morally, valuable or virtuous in appearance and virtue of its use" (Strongs)
- E. A promoter of peace - Mark 9:50
- F. A manifestation of influence - Matt. 5:13
- G. A means of facilitating communication - Col. 4:6

II. WE ARE CALLED SALT BECAUSE OF:

- A. Our preserving ability - Prov. 14:34
- B. Our penetrating effect - Acts 8:1, 4; 17:6
- C. Our purifying influence
 - 1. 2Kings 2:19-22 - Elisha cleansed the waters at Jericho with salt.
 - 2. In ancient times, newborn babies were washed in salt to cleanse their bodies and to give firmness to their skin - Ez. 16:4
 - 3. Christians have a purifying influence on the world around them. The world acts differently when a Christian is among them - Rom. 12:2.
- D. Our pleasant nature - Christians flavor the world around them; they make it taste like Jesus - Phil. 1:27
- E. Our poisonous potential - Salt can kill - Judges 9:45
 - 1. A Christian who is not ashamed will have a dampening effect on the practice of sin around him - 2Cor. 5:17

III. PERSEVERANCE OF SALT

A. It was possible for salt in that day to lose its quality. The salt used then was far different from that which we see today. Our salt is a chemical compound sodium chloride. The salt used in the ancient world was either mined from the salt cliffs along the Dead Sea, which were 7 miles long and several hundred feet high, or it was evaporated from the waters of the Dead Sea. Either way, it was always mixed with minerals or vegetable matter; some salt was mixed with bituminous material making it unpalatable or poisonous. When this substance was exposed to the elements or mixed with water or food, the salt lost its salty taste or gave off a noxious flavor. Even the surface salt that was dug from the cliffs was discarded because exposure to the light rendered it tasteless.

B. It is possible for Christians to lose their saltiness as well.

1. This happens when we allow ourselves to be influenced by contact with the world. When get to be more like the world than we are like the Lord, then we have lost that which sets us apart and makes us valuable to the Lord's purposes
2. This happens when we allow ourselves to become a blend of Christian and other elements from the world

C. The destination of unsalted Christians

1. In ancient times, when salt lost its savor, it was then taken out and used for paving materials, especially the bituminous and cliff salt
2. 1Cor. 9:27

Conclusion:

- A. Christians must become salted souls, cultivating a strong influence for Christ in the world around them. Otherwise the Lord will consider us without flavor and cast us out
- B. Lev. 2:13; 1Peter 2:12; Phil. 2:15