



## **DEVOTIONAL WEEK #3 - SALT AND LIGHT**

**“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.**

**“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

**Matthew 5:13-16**

Have you ever noticed how some foods taste SO much better with salt?

### **TASTE AND SEE:**

We're going to do a little taste test of foods with and without salt. If you're a life group leader, hopefully, you've read this and can gather a few items to have ready for your group to enjoy together. If you're doing this on your own, a few recommendations would be cucumber and/or tomato slices, some French or Italian bread, slices of watermelon, and cups of popcorn or pretzels (both plain and salted). Pass around a platter or have everyone take a couple of each item. One of those items you'll try plain. Then, pass around a salt shaker/grinder and try it again once you sprinkle it with salt.

**Can you tell the difference?**

**How does the flavor change or become enhanced?**

You could do a similar thing with light. Turn out all of the lights (you might have to wait until it's evening or go into a room that can get very dark with no window light). Sit in darkness for a bit. You can continue to talk to one another (this is a great time for an icebreaker question, just don't use any electronics or anything with a glowing screen). Now light a candle.

**How does the atmosphere of the room change and what do you observe?**

**Before reading on, how would this experiment remind you of how we are to be salt and light?**

## **SYMBOLISM OF SALT IN THE BIBLE:**

The bible references salt way more than we may realize! To get the full impact of how it's used and what it represents, let's take a look at some of them.

It's not always used negatively, most are positive. However, there are some passages where it represents death and punishment. In Genesis, God rains down sulfur on Sodom & Gomorrah for debauchery and neglect of the poor.(Gen. 19:24) As punishment for disobeying the angel's orders and looking back to catch a glimpse of the sight, Lot's wife turns into a pillar of salt. (Gen. 19:26)

The book of Judges describes the day Abimelek attacked the city, captured it, and killed the people. After destroying everything, he scattered salt over it. (Judges 9:45)

Job asks if the food eaten without salt is without taste. Jeremiah describes a salt land where no one lives. Ezekiel refers to the swamps and marshes not being fresh because they will be left for salt (Ezekiel 47:11).

As with other seasonings, too much or too little salt can create different outcomes. Passages about salt being used in the Israelites' services show it representing something else.

In Leviticus, we learn why salt is added to grain offerings as it represents purity and preservation (Lev 2:13: Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings)

To this day, every Friday at sunset, many practicing Jews still dip their bread into salt to keep their agreement with God as a reminder.

We learn in Numbers of the covenant of salt made with the priests (Numbers 18:19: "It shall be an everlasting covenant of salt before God for you and for your offspring as well.") 2 Chronicles also shares a covenant of salt reference to King David. This was a serious covenant because it was sealed by sacrifice. Sacrifices always included salt which was a way to make each offering to God a little more costly, a little more precious, as it represents loyalty and friendship. (2 Chronicles 13:5: "Surely you know that the God of Israel gave David kingship over Israel forever—to him and his sons—by a covenant of salt").

In Mark, we read the preserving qualities of salt during tribulations (Mark 9:49: "Everyone will be salted with fire.") and In Colossians 4:6, Paul says that believers should let their speech be gracious and "seasoned with salt"

## **QUESTIONS:**

**Given all of these examples, and the words in bold that reveal how God uses salt so symbolically, What does the salt of the earth mean?**

**But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.**

**How can we as believers and followers of Jesus avoid losing our saltiness?**

**In what ways can Christians today act as "salt" to preserve the moral and spiritual integrity of their communities, especially in contexts of injustice, moral decay, or spiritual apathy?**

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Think of the many ways we know of light and the purposes it serves. A lamp illuminates the way in the dark, sunlight provides the energy we need to sustain life on earth and provides us with that critical Vitamin D. It's because of light that we can see the entire spectrum of colors! We thankfully have electricity where we can just flick a light switch and see in a dark room, but back in those days, the people Jesus spoke to had to light an oil lamp. The thought of putting it under a clay bowl would seem pretty silly.

## **DISCUSS:**

**What does the light of the world mean for us as followers of Jesus?**

**Where does light stand out the most, in the light or the dark? Do you think we as Christians can play it safe and only stay in atmospheres of light and not tend to go to the dark? Why or why not?**

**How can believers effectively shine the “light” of Christ in their daily lives, particularly in environments that are hostile to or indifferent towards the gospel? How do we shine in a way that keeps us from being prideful? Is it possible to stay humble & keep the glory on the Father? How can you make a difference in your circle of influence?**

The purpose of salt and light is to preserve and illuminate, and this is what Jesus calls His followers to do. Like both salt and light, our relationship with God should have an obvious impact on everyone who comes in contact with it. Jesus isn't just calling us to be devoted, He's encouraging us to have an influence everywhere we go.

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