

## THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT SERIES “MAINTAINING OUR SALTINESS”

Text: Matthew 5:13

**Key Word:** Salt

**Key Thought:** The Uniqueness of Living a Salty Life

Due to the fact that I preached a series of messages on the Beatitudes in 1996, I have chosen to go directly to the verses that follow that wonderful teaching. Many believe that these words were actually a compilation of hours of teaching that had their truth founded in these few chapters. It therefore, may have been the epitome of everything that Jesus thought was important for His disciples to follow.

The Church of Jesus Christ has had to learn to survive in a hostile environment. We are constantly being bombarded by those who are controlled by a different spirit. We are **in the world** but yet not supposed to be **affected/engulfed by the world**. This will never be an easy task. Good people are often falling into the subtle traps of this world’s system. This is not something new. The same battle existed at the time of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord prepared the early Church to face this issue head on. Even in the midst of an imperfect Church, Jesus offered a way to deal with the constant assaults from this world’s system. Through His teaching we can see that Jesus believed “**the best defence is a good offense.**”

As He completed the nine beatitudes, we find Him proposing a number of ways to offensively overcome the subtlety of the worldly system that His disciples were surrounded by. He began by using an illustration using common, every day salt.

*“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 by men.”*

*Matthew 5:13*

### What Is So Unique about Salt That We Can Apply to Our Christian Life?

**I. THE PURPOSE OF SALT**

**II. THE PERPLEXITY OF SALT**

**III. THE PERIL OF SALT**

## I. THE PURPOSE OF SALT

### A. Its Preserving Effect

\*\*\* As a child I often remember passing by the meat store close to the corner of Sidney and First Street. The owner put his barrels of fish out into the street under the hot sun. The smell was a little too much for both me and my dog, Rex. He would cross the street every time we approached this store. Yet these same fish never spoiled. This is because they were soaking in a brine of salt.\*\*\*

Some 2,700 years' B.C. a publication made in China is probably the earliest known treatise on pharmacology. A major portion of this writing was devoted to a discussion of more than 40 kinds of salt, including descriptions of two methods of extracting salt and putting it in usable form that are amazingly similar to processes used today.

Nothing could be left for long in the heat associated with the climate found in the land of Canaan without decaying. There is a very unique truth here about salt for those who are disciples of Christ. We are placed into this world to be a preserving ingredient to help prevent further decay. This world system will continue to decay, but we can slow down the process. We need to have an antiseptic influence on the world around us.

There were offerings that were set aside for the priests and their families called "*an everlasting covenant of salt*" (Numbers 18:19). This covenant indicated faithfulness, dependability, and durability. Nomads of the Middle East still eat "*bread and salt*" together as the sign and seal of their preserving covenant of brotherhood.

**B. Its Protective Effect** - Ezekiel tells us that in ancient times the Israelites rubbed newborn children with salt in order to protect them from the elements (Ezekiel 16:4). As strange as this may appear, it was practised on all who were cautiously treated at childbirth. Those who were neglected were not treated in this manner and became susceptible to the often extreme whether conditions.

**C. Its Purification Effect** - Anyone who has ever had a cut knows the effect when salt is placed into the wound. It is not a pleasant experience. Yet it can serve as a healing agent in aiding the cleansing of the wound.

**D. Its Palatability Effect** - Salt is also used to make food agreeable to our taste buds. We've made the mistake of buying both corn and peas that were not salted. I realize they are made for those who must keep to a low sodium diet. But the taste is just not the same without a little bit of salt added.

## I. THE PURPOSE OF SALT (Contd.)

### D. Its Palatability Effect (Contd.)

We, as followers of Christ, should also add a little flavour to life. I say a little because we need to know when enough is enough. The famous Jebel Usdum is a mountain of rock salt, about 11 km. (7 mi.) long and several hundred feet high. This ridge extends along the south and southwest corners of the Dead Sea. Salt-pits formed an important source of revenue to the rulers of the country, and Antiochus presented a valuable favor on Jerusalem by presenting the city with 375 bushels of salt for their temple service.

It is important to emphasize that plants and crops cannot grow in land that has too much salt. When Abimelech took the city of Shechem, we are told he sowed the land with salt, so that it would always remain barren and unfruitful (Judges 9:45; cf. Zephaniah 2:9). Just because we have plenty of salt to use, it doesn't mean that we need to use it all at once. Some people haven't discovered the difference between sprinkling and pouring.

\*\* It's like the police officer who became annoyed after stopping this same driver a number of times for failing to come to a complete stop at a certain intersection. The driver used the excuse that he "*just about came to a stop.*"

In order to get his point across, the officer said, "*If I started to beat you over the head with my Billy stick, would you like for me to come to a complete stop or would you be satisfied if I just slowed down a little.*" \*\*

## II. THE PERPLEXITY OF SALT

**A. The Pertinacity of Salt** - The word "*pertinacity*" means "*tenacity of purpose; unyielding adherence.*" It keeps doing what it is suppose to do. It's not salt one day and pepper the next day. Even though we often don't recognize the good its doing – it keeps doing good!!

This is the same for us. We must keep doing what God designed us to do even though others may not notice it. Perhaps it is because our life and actions have become routine. It is not wrong when we don't stick out in a crowd.

\*\*\* David Marine (1880-1976) is the "*father*" of iodized salt in the United States. As the result of his and co-workers research on endemic goiter and iodine deficiency, the Michigan State Medical Society, in 1924, launched a goiter prevention program using iodized salt. Medical science since has identified a far more serious threat than the cosmetic problem of goiter -- mental retardation. (Contd.) \*\*\*

## II. THE PERPLEXITY OF SALT (Contd.)

### A. The Pertinacity of Salt (Contd.)

\*\*\* The "hidden hunger" of iodine deficiency causes a 10-15% reduction in a population's IQ capability, mental retardation and cretinism. In the United States, salt producers cooperated with public health authorities and made both iodized and plain salt available to consumers at the same cost. Newspapers urged people to use iodized salt for the prevention of iodine deficiency.

The Michigan program was highly successful and iodized salt use quickly spread throughout the country. Ultimately, household use of iodized salt eliminated iodine deficiency in the North America. In 1955, researchers reported that 75.8% of U.S. households used only iodized salt. The Salt Institute found that nearly 70% of the table salt sold in the United States is iodized.

\*\*\*

<http://www.saltinstitute.org>

### B. The Peculiarity of Salt

Sodium chloride is sold in several different particle sizes (gradation) and forms, depending on the intended end use. Various crystals can be seen in rock salt used for deicing. Fine granules are typical of table salt and even finer popcorn salt. Kosher salt, pickling salt and ice cream salt are slightly coarser.

Small compressed pellets are used in water softeners and large salt blocks are used as salt licks for livestock. When viewed under strong magnification, all sodium chloride is crystalline. Very large cubic crystals, of two, three or more inches in size, can be seen in some salt mines. They are transparent and cleave into perfect cubes when struck with a hard object.

As God's people we have many different "uses" although we are much the same in content. Isn't it wonderful how God can use us in many places and situations in a **Preserving, Protective, Purifying and Palliative** Effectiveness?

**C. The Penetration of Salt** - Another important factor of the perplexity of salt is that is able to penetrate and permeate into many materials and liquids. It has a way of seeping into anything it touches. This is one reason why it was added as a seasoning with all animal sacrifices (Leviticus 2:13; Ezra 6:9; Ezekiel 43:24; Mark 9:49). Elisha the prophet once cast it into the pool of Jericho to purify the water (II Kings 2:19-22). Paul linked salt with wisdom:

*"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."*

*Colossians 4:6*

### III. THE PERIL OF SALT

**A. The Pollution of Salt** - The word “*pollution*” means “*to make unclean or impure; dirty; corrupt.*” When we begin to sprinkle a little flavouring from a salt shaker, we can expect to get something that will appease our taste buds.

\*\*\* I remember once going to a restaurant and picking up the salt shaker and applying it to my meal. To my surprise, pepper came out instead. I took the pepper shaker and shook a bit in my hand and discovered that it contained the salt. **Someone had switched the shakers.** I was thankful that I noticed the mistake before applying too much of the wrong seasoning. But what would have happened if I did the same thing but didn’t notice until I had plastered my food with pepper. I know I would have found it hard to swallow. \*\*\*

The same thing happens when we as salt become polluted to the point that we are no longer offering the same flavour as is expected of us. God’s people must be very careful not to make a confession of faith in Jesus Christ and yet act like a disciple of the devil. Sadly enough, this happens way too often to believe that it is just a coincidence. I believe there is an all out attack against the Church in order to have it lose its credibility. I don’t believe that good people wake up in the morning and say to themselves, “*I wonder what evil I can do today?*”

This has not left God out of the picture. I believe that God is allowing His Church to be shaken (He may even be doing some of the shaking) in order to have us see what is really inside us.

“We are facing an integrity crisis. Not only is the *conduct* of the church in question, but so is the very *character* of the church. The world is asking, ‘*Can the church be trusted?*’ and *how* we answer is as important as *what* we answer.

For nineteen hundred years, the church has been telling the world to admit its sins, repent, and believe the gospel. Today, in the twilight of the twentieth century, the world is telling the church to face up to her sins, repent, *and start being the true church of that gospel.* We Christians boast that we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but perhaps the gospel of Christ is ashamed of us. For some reason, our ministry doesn’t match our message. Something is wrong with the church’s integrity.”

Warren Wiersbe  
“*The Integrity Crisis*”  
Oliver Nelson Books, 1988  
p. 17

### III. THE PERIL OF SALT (Contd.)

**B. The Precariousness of Salt** - Salt is a precarious substance in that it is subject to a continued risk! Jesus asked an important question in reference to salt.

*“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?”*

*Matthew 5:13*

The Bible doesn't make the answer to this question an easy thing to do. We are told not to draw from the world and remain unaffected by it.

*“To keep oneself (unstained) from being polluted by the world.”*

*James 1:27*

Everyone in Palestine understood one way that salt commonly lost its saltiness. When the salt was being processed, it was placed upon sheets that would prevent it from coming into contact with any soil around it. The harvesters knew that if salt touched the earth for any length of time that the earth would literally drain the saltiness from it. Once that happened it could not be restored back to its original condition. What a vivid illustration for us to remember.

### C. The Perishableness of Salt

In order to place a final capping on this illustration, our Lord uses a picturesque scene or an emotional word play.

*It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.”*

*Matthew 5:13*

“In the synagogue among the Jews, there was a custom that, if a Jew became an apostate and then returned to the faith, before he was received back into the synagogue, he must in penitence lie across the door of the synagogue and invite people to trample upon him as they entered. In certain places the Christian Church took over that custom, and a Christian who had been ejected by discipline from the church, was compelled, before he was received back, to lie upon the door of the Church and to invite people as they entered, *“Trample upon me who am the salt which has lost its savour.”*

William Barclay  
*“The Gospel of Matthew”*  
Volume 1, pp. 121-122

## What Is So Unique about Salt That We Can Apply to Our Christian Life?

### **I. THE PURPOSE OF SALT**

- A. Its Preserving Effect
- B. Its Protective Effect
- C. Its Purification Effect
- D. Its Palatability Effect - Agreeable to the Taste

### **II. THE PERPLEXITY OF SALT**

- A. The Pertinacity of Salt - Tenacity of Purpose; Unyielding Adherence
- B. The Peculiarity of Salt
- C. The Penetration of Salt

### **III. THE PERIL OF SALT**

- A. The Pollution of Salt - To Make Unclean or Impure; Dirty; Corrupt
- B. The Precariousness of Salt - Subject to Continued Risk
- C. The Perishableness of Salt

C:\My Documents\WPWin(21)\Sermons.2024\Sermon on the Mount\Matthew 5\_13.wpd

Date: Nov 24/24

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Lord Reign in Me - G

**THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT SERIES  
MAINTAINING OUR SALTINESS**

**Text: Matthew 5:13**

**Key Word:** Salt

**Key Thought:** The Uniqueness of Living a Salty Life

**What Is So Unique about Salt That We Can Apply to Our Christian Life?**

**I. THE PURPOSE OF SALT**

**A. Its Preserving Effect - *Numbers 18:19***

**B. Its Protective Effect - *Ezekiel 16:4***

**C. Its Purification Effect -**

**D. Its Palatability Effect - *Judges 9:45; (cf. Zephaniah 2:9)***

**II. THE PERPLEXITY OF SALT**

**A. The Pertinacity of Salt -**

**B. The Peculiarity of Salt**

**C. The Penetration of Salt - *Leviticus 2:13; Ezra 6:9; Ezekiel 43:24; Mark 9:49; II Kings 2:19-22; Colossians 4:6***

**III. THE PERIL OF SALT**

**A. The Pollution of Salt -**

**B. The Precariousness of Salt - *James 1:27***

**C. The Perishableness of Salt**