

SALT

Matthew 5:13-16 discusses two familiar and important elements of everyday life: salt and light. Salt will be discussed in this lesson, and light will be discussed at a later date.

Matthew 5:13----'Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.'

"Ye are the salt of the earth...". Notice that Jesus did not state the He was the salt, nor that just the disciples/apostles were the salt. This is one of the verses that we can (and should) make very personal. Ye----you and me----- are the salt of the earth.

So, let's look at some things about salt.

SALT:

1.) **is taken from the earth and the sea.** But, no matter where it comes from, salt...

2.) **must be refined.** We are unable to serve the Lord until he cleanses us and refines us as we follow and obey His Word. Refining is often mentioned in the Scripture.

3.) **is square in shape.** No matter how you 'beat it', it remains square. It keeps its shape. When I first found out this bit of information about salt, I admit that I was not sure about it. When our son was younger, he had a microscope----so, I decided it was time for me to look at salt. Sure enough---when I looked at salt under the microscope, each piece was shaped like a square. OK--so what if I take a blunt instrument and beat it (although it is soft enough to be cut with a knife). Sure 'nough---when I looked at it again, guess what? Each piece was still square. So, does it hurt to be square? Many times young people (and older people) will look at someone and call them square, usually in a derogatory tone of voice. But what does 'square' mean? Several meanings are given by Webster, but a few of them are 'having all four sides of equal length; to make straight, level or even; to balance; fair, honest, straightforward'. Well, none of those seem like bad qualities. Shouldn't the Christian be equal (or the same at all times---not one shape at work, another at church, another at home), straightforward in dealing with others, always fair and honest? Being square may not make us popular, but it can make us that 'good and faithful servant' that we might 'enter...into the joy of thy Lord.' (Matthew 25:23)

4.) **is seasoning.** It helps food taste good; it adds flavor. Have you ever been on a low-salt diet? If not, let me tell you---it is rather 'blah'. Have you ever over-salted something? That, too, does not taste good. So, what does salt do when it seasons? It brings attention to the food, not to itself. Ouch!! Just as a small amount of salt can change the flavor of food, a few dedicated, praying, Spirit-filled believers can influence the community and the world. Sounds like I might need to replace selfishness with selflessness, and begin to influence others in such a way that they see the Saviour, not me.

5.) is a **preservative**. To preserve means to keep from injury or destruction, to keep from decaying. As salt fights decay in food, the influence of Christians retards degeneration in society. Some may think that in order for the influence of the Christians to be effective, they must be in the majority. A remnant is defined as a 'small number', and Romans 11:5 states "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." To fight decay in the world, we do not have to be large in number, just filled with faith.

6.) an **antiseptic**. This implies durability and purity. An antiseptic destroys microorganisms by arresting their activity. Salt as an expression of purity is seen in II Kings 2:20, 21. Elisha used salt in the healing of the waters. Ezekiel 16:4 makes note of how the Israelites rubbed infants with salt to make the skin dense and firm, and for purification and dedication of them to God.

7.) **represents peace or fellowship**. In ancient times, brotherhood was sealed by eating salt together. Eating salt together make people friends and they cannot fight! Also, if you partook of salt (and thus hospitality), you were considered to be under that person's protection. There is even a SALT (treaty). How does this apply to the Christian? To man, food is not acceptable without (at least a little bit of) salt. Could we then say that prayers offered without peace of heart towards fellow men is also savorless? (Matthew 5:23, 24.)

Perhaps you can think of other aspects of salt. But, in closing of this lesson, let us think about this. Salt is different from the food into which it is placed. Are we not also admonished to be different from the world? John 17 is the Lord's prayer for his disciples, and for us today. In verse 15 and 16 He prays "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." If God did not expect His children to be an influence in the world, He would immediately translate us to heaven when we accept Christ as our Saviour. But, He does not do that. He leaves us here to be that salt (and light) to others. My grandfather was a minister, and I still remember that when he would preach from John 17:15, 16, he would mention that we are in the world, but not of the world. And, he would often phrase it this way---We are insulated, not isolated. In other words, through Christ we can be protected from the decay of the world, yet still be a positive influence to the world. We are not saved to go into hiding---we are saved to have an influence on others. I find it interesting that the Greek word for 'savor' in Matthew 5:13, is *moriano* (mo-rah'ee-no) and means become fool, or make foolish. May our prayer be, "Lord please help me to keep my savor, for if I lose that savor, I have become foolish. With Your guidance, help me to remain faithful in my influence on others, and may they see You in me. Lord, hide me behind the cross. Amen."

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