

Salt Without Saltiness

Harmony M.B.C., June 24, 2012 (Morning)

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

Salt is a staple commodity in human cultures. Man has almost always been able to find some salt to add to his diet wherever there were human communities. Salt mining by man goes back to the beginning of time. There is a certain level of salt in everything that grows, but most human cultures have gotten to the point that they can't taste that salt. Job (6:6) asks the question as to whether that which is unsavory can be eaten without salt, and it seems that for most of humanity, the answer is "no."

Jesus makes His metaphor using what is probably the most universally known substance among human cultures. I think there is reason for this. I think He intended that this lesson be usable and meaningful for the people of God in any culture, in any generation, in any part of the world, through time. I believe this makes the lesson taught here critically important to every believer. So, what do we find in the lesson? Let's trust the Holy Spirit to teach us today.

I. Christ specifically identifies the salt (Ye) which is to provide saltiness, (savor/flavor) for the earth

- Only believers are given the power and opportunity to flavor the earth. Why?
 - ▶ Only believers have the spiritual saltiness Christ alludes to
 - ▶ The answer lies in what Paul calls it (**Col. 1:27**), "...Christ in you, the hope of glory."
- Only believers would be possessed of the inclination to it
 - ▶ **Psalms 109:30** I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.
 - ▶ **Psalms 89:1** "...with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations."
 - ▶ The key is expressed by Paul in **Phil. 1:21** "...to me to live is Christ..."
 - ▶ The Lord's church occupies a special position in this salting process (it was to the church that Christ said in **Acts 1:8** "...ye shall be witnesses unto me....")

II. In the mind of Christ, it appears that salting of the earth is essential and if the appointed salt does not do it, then the earth will not be salted (in the sense He means it) (wherewith shall it [the earth] be salted?)

- Wherewith = with what
- Salt is essential for life on earth - I believe that without believers on this planet, God would put an immediate end to it (there has never been an age, a generation on earth without believers)
- Only salt can provide the flavoring that human civilization depends on, and enjoys, as "saltiness." One note: if you use salt substitute of any kind, be aware that those compounds are actually salts themselves...just salt with a different mineral (such as potassium) bonded with chloride - the sodium is not there
- Just so, only the people of God can provide that divine savor to creation that God intends

- This exclusive purpose and privilege is seldom thought about by the Lord's people, but it should be.
- Someone has said, "You may be the only representation of what God is like that some people will ever know."

III. The Lord also causes us to realize that salt that loses its power to be salty is good for nothing but dishonor ("...it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.")

- We are useless for any honorable thing to the Lord if our spiritual savor is lacking
 - ▶ We want to take special note of the fact that **it is Christ Himself** who declares us good for nothing honorable if we get to that point
 - ▶ What exactly is this thing of "salt losing his savor?"
 - For churches this would mean no longer fulfilling their roles and responsibilities
 - ✓ Christ said something in **Mark 9:50** that speaks to one aspect of that: "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another."
 - ✓ Members of the Lord's church should inspire one another to grow in the things of faith, hope, and love. That's the saltiness part; the "have salt in yourselves" part. When church members interact in such a way as to (**Heb. 10:24**) "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" they have peace one with another.
 - ✓ Members of the Lord's church having the savor of God's things can also convey that saltiness to those on the outside by their very attitude toward fellow members and to the church's mission. This is having salt in yourselves, and salting the world with it.
 - ✓ For believers losing savor would mean no longer showing forth any Christ-like characteristics before the world
 - ✓ It would also mean getting to a place in your life where you never challenged unsaved people to think about Christ, eternity, salvation, sin
 - Believers can live lives that convey no idea at all that they are the people of God. All a person has to do is live for the things of the world and it is done!
 - When churches or believers get to such a place as I have described, according to our Savior, they are good for nothing but to be cast out and walked on by humanity
 - It will help us understand the meaning here if we understand that the phrase "cast out" is similar to saying "thrown in the trash pile as worthless."
 - There's probably nothing on earth more pitiful and out of place than churches or a believers that has become so jaded, so worldly, so out of touch with spiritual things, that they have become good for nothing but to be thrown into the waste heap of society and trampled on by men.
- This may raise a question in our minds, "How is this different from what Jesus promised us anyway if we lived for Him?"
 - ▶ It is true that He promised us that if the world hated Him (and it did) then it would hate us likewise (which it will). It is true that He has said we would be despised and slandered. But the difference between this kind of abuse and what He is telling us will happen if we lose our ability or quit functioning in a way to provide spiritual flavor is all about final outcomes
 - ▶ Note: **Luke 6:22-23 Blessed are ye**, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you *from their company*, and shall reproach *you*, and cast out your name as evil, **for**

the Son of man's sake. 23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

- ▶ When the hatred, reproach, rejection and slander is for Jesus' sake, we are guaranteed a blessing
- ▶ When we are cast out, rejected, considered useless because we have not played the role of salt, there is no blessing
- Second, what about our answer to Christ before the judgment seat? We know that every man's work will be tried. If our doings on earth had no spiritual flavor, no spiritual saltiness, what then?
- Just one final observation about salt losing its saltiness. The only way to make that happen is to pass an electric current through a salt water solution until you drive off the chlorine from the sodium. What you get when that is done is very reactive residue (the sodium as sodium hydroxide) and an explosive environment with poison air (as the breaking apart of the two produces hydrogen and chlorine gas).
- So making salt not salt produces something that will severely burn and destroy and creates an explosive and poisonous environment