

Please Pass the Salt
Pastor John Hicks
First United Methodist Church

Early Roman soldiers received an allowance of salt, which was called a *salarium* a "salary." A good soldier had to be "worth his salt." Thus comes the saying. Another saying that we are familiar with comes when we are told that something should be "taken with a grain of salt". We know when we hear this that we should be wary or be careful about what was presented to us. Sometimes things are presented to us which are bland, tasteless, or even worse, in bad taste. Salt adds flavor which causes many items which we consume to become more palatable. Salt also purifies and adds zest.

Have you ever considered the power of Jesus' simple statement, "You are the salt of the earth"? (Matthew 5:13) It was an extreme compliment! Salt was one of the most prized commodities of the first century. Even today if you refer to someone as "the salt of the earth", you have saluted that person's solid worth and usefulness.

Think of some of the uses of salt and you will see even more clearly the picture Jesus' statement.

First, salt is a preservative. First-century Palestine had no refrigeration system, so they had to come up with some method of keeping things from spoiling. The tasty perch which were and still are caught in the Sea of Galilee were a major item for export. Salt was the only way to keep the fish from going bad and smelling like forgotten bait in the boat. Even today, a Virginia ham is preserved with salt. Where salty Christians are, spoilage or corruption should decrease. Where salt is scarce, sin abounds.

A second function of salt is to enhance flavor. A home-grown tomato is good, but with a little salt it's exceptional. Salt helps bring out the flavor of foods. We Christians should bring out the flavor of life around us. We should be the most vibrant, positive, enthusiastic people on earth because our past is forgiven our future is secure, and we are filled with the greatest power in the universe – the Holy Spirit! There is nothing that comes our way that we with God can't handle together. The lives of those around us are flavored when they see and experience our joy and peace and life in Christ.

A third characteristic of salt is that it produces thirst. People sell popcorn and peanuts at movie theaters and sporting events not only because they taste good, but because they also lead to more sales of soft drinks and water. You've heard the old saying, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." That may be true, but if you feed him some salt you will help the process along. Salt makes people thirsty. Salty Christians help make people thirsty for that living water which is our Lord.

Remember, "You are the salt of the earth." You are something unique to the world, someone designated as a peculiar gift from God for the world, a person given to "flavor" the world for God. Wherever you are this week, wherever you work and play, in the name of Jesus, share some salt! Be the preserving, enhancing, thirst creating element for our Lord.