

Chardon Christian Fellowship
Home Fellowship Lessons
The Beatitudes Study

Lesson 11: You Are the Salt of the Earth (Matthew 5:13)

I. INTRODUCTION

VERSE	BLESSED ARE ...	Explanation	REWARD	Explanation
Mt 5:3	Poor in Spirit	<i>Spiritually bankrupt</i>	Kingdom of Heaven	<i>Salvation; citizen in Christ's kingdom</i>
Mt 5:4	Those who Mourn	<i>Lament over their sin</i>	They shall be comforted	<i>Forgiveness, assurance; Holy Spirit is The Comforter</i>
Mt 5:5	The Meek	<i>Gentle, mild, 'resting in God'</i>	Inherit the earth	<i>Rule with Christ on earth</i>
Mt 5:6	Hunger & Thirst for Righteousness	<i>Like tunnel-vision focused on God</i>	Will be satisfied	<i>Will be satiated or gorged</i>
Mt 5:7	Merciful	<i>Heart of compassion and forgiveness</i>	Will receive mercy	<i>Spiritual forgiveness from the Father</i>
Mt 5:8	Pure in Heart	<i>Heart devoid of impurities; purged</i>	Will see God	<i>See through spiritual eyes the handiworks of God</i>
Mt 5:9	Peacemakers	<i>We are His shalom-makers; workmanship of righteousness</i>	Called sons of God	<i>Adopted as sons & daughters through Blood of Christ</i>
Mt 5:10	Persecuted	<i>The world hates us because of Christ; to put to flight</i>	Kingdom of Heaven	<i>Salvation; citizen in Christ's kingdom</i>
Mt 5:11-12	Persecuted (part 2)	<i>Persecuted because of HIM</i>	Reward in Heaven in great	<i>Our rewards are about Him; to Him be the glory</i>
Mt 5:13	Salt of the Earth			
Mt 5:14-16	Light of the World			

II. LESSON

Read **Matthew 5:13**

A. "Salt"

Common salt is sodium chloride, and technically humans are 0.4% sodium chloride, and our blood is 0.9% sodium chloride. So "yes" we have salt in us, but people are not "salt" in a literal sense ... well except Lot's wife in **Genesis 19:26**

Jesus was not referring to our salt content. His sermon in 27 A.D. was to His disciples, fishermen, common people and religious people. Jesus metaphorically refers to us as "salt" which is something everyone was familiar. So let's take a quick look at salt.

1. Salt is Valuable

Historically salt has been a valuable commodity. It is either mined from underground deposits or created by evaporating clean salty water or brine (water saturated with salt). Throughout history cities that had salt mines became wealthy by trading the salt (Salzburg, Austria; Timbuktu, Mali; Venice-Genoa, Italy; Poland; imperial China).

In ancient Rome, salt on the table was a mark of a rich patron; those who sat nearer the host were "above the salt," and those less favored were "below the salt". ... The Roman historian Pliny the Elder stated, that "in Rome ... the soldier's pay was originally salt ... The Latin word for salary (salarium) is derived from the word salt (sola).

Hence the idiom "worth one's salt" meaning worth your pay.

Clean salt was a valuable commodity in ancient times, signifying importance when being referenced as a commodity or in conversation.

Ezra 4:14 _____

In this verse, Bishlam, Mithredath and Tabeel are claiming to be loyal to King Artaxerses and are actually paid by his government and trusted (“eat of the King’s salt”). This refers to salt as a precious commodity that is paid to loyal servants, or that someone is important since they share of the King’s salt.

Ezra 7:21-22 _____

In this passage, King Artaxerses identifies in a letter to his governors that Ezra is to be given what he needs in silver (for purchasing materials; ~7500 pounds), wheat (food; ~600 bushels), wine (clean liquid for drink; ~600 gallons), oil (for cooking; ~600 gallons) and salt (precious, valuable, preservative). The magnitude of this in the Hebrew (or Aramaic) is best interpreted with English Standard Version (ESV) in verse 22 “... and salt without prescribing how much”.

2. Salt is a preservative

Have you ever wondered about the origins of salt pork and pickles? Salt has been a preservative since before the time of Jesus, and used up to the time of refrigeration:

Salt has been used for salt preservation of fish, meats, salted pork & bacon

Brine (salt saturated water) for preservation of vegetables (cucumbers, beans, etc.). What do we call brine preserved cucumbers? _____

Salt preservation of fish allowed the fish to be shipped to land-locked areas, and was a practice in the Old Testament times in Egypt, Canaan and elsewhere.

3. Salt enhances flavor

Job 6:6 _____

The various translations are slightly different on the last part of this verse. The Hebrew interpreted as ‘white of egg’ is *riyr* (liquid or broth) *challamuth* (used once; meaning is uncertain). Regardless of the definition of *challamuth*, the verse states that a tasteless broth or liquid that now can be tasted with salt.

Scientists today state that salt enhances our taste buds to detect more subtle flavors. Salt also mutes sharp bitter flavors.

Colossians 4:5-6 _____

How do we interpret this verse? _____

4. Salt has a permanence

Ever over-salted something and tried to “unsalt” it? There is a degree of permanence to salt.

Holy God referred to His covenant with David as a covenant of salt. This showed God's commitment and the permanence of the relationship

2 Chronicles 13:5 _____

Also, salt is used to refer to Mosaic covenant with the Hebrews

Numbers 18:19 _____

Leviticus 2:13 _____

B. You are the "Salt of the Earth"

How do we interpret "*you are the salt of the earth*"? _____

1. You are valuable

Matthew 6:26 _____

Ephesians 2:4-10 _____

Romans 5:8 _____

2. You are a preservation

Theologians state that Christians are representation to the world of a saving God. The Holy Spirit through us is a preservative, keeping this world from rotting and putrefying as a result of sin. The power of the world and sin is corruption – the power of the Holy Spirit of God is life.

Romans 8:20-21 _____

1 John 2:15-17 _____

3. You enhance "flavor"

In the presence of evil and sin in the world, we represent the light and purity of our God. The Holy Spirit through us, mutes the bitterness of sin and death with the hope of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Let's go back to the verse in Colossians where it refers to our saltiness !

Colossians 4:5-6 _____

The flavoring is the GRACE extended by Jesus to all men. If our hearts and minds are focused on that grace, we "flavor" the conversation with the truth of Jesus and Salvation. Again we see in the Sermon on the Mount that it focuses back to Jesus. The "salt" in our conversation is Him !!!!

4. You have a permanence

Our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life and we will be with the Lord forever.

Philippians 4:3 _____

C. Tasteless, useless salt! Good for nothing but to be trampled under foot

In the old days, you either obtained good clean salt (valuable) or salt that was contaminated. They could not re-purify salt. So pure salt was extremely valuable !!!

If salt was contaminated or had impurities, it was fairly worthless.

At the mention of “trampled under foot” most everyone at the Sermon on the Mount probably would have nodded their head in agreement. They knew this concept.

Useless salt was thrown on the road to prevent grass from growing and neutralized the bacteria in the animal manure. This practice was still in use in Middle East in 1800’s.

Salting was symbolic of destruction and killing the earth to prevent reuse.

Judges 9:45 _____

As an example, it said that Roman General Scipio salted Carthage in 146 B.C. when it was destroyed ending the Punic Wars to prevent reuse.

III. CONCLUSION/APPLICATION

How do we apply this lesson to us today?

- (1) We could focus on the properties of salt and how we as Christians are “salt”:
valuable, preservative, flavoring, permanent
- (2) However, let us consider salt’s properties and the verse in Colossians:

Colossians 4:5-6 _____

Let our words, in any conversation, contain GRACE:

Valuable – sharing the immeasurable value of Jesus death and resurrection as a propitiation for our sins.

Preservative – the only way to save a soul from destruction is through the saving GRACE of Jesus

Flavoring – let our conversations be flavored with the love and grace of God

Permanent - the only permanence is God’s Word and God’s Truth.

Resources:

[New American Standard Bible](#), NASB, Lochman Foundation

[New King James Bible](#), NKJV, Thomas Nelson

[English Standard Version](#), ESV, Crossway Bibles, Good News Publishers

[Mounce Reverse-Interlinear New Testament](#), Robert H. Mounce and William D. Mounce

[New English Translation of the Bible](#), NET, Biblical Studies Press LLC

[Bible Knowledge Commentary](#), John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, Victor Books

[Mounce Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament](#), William D. Mounce.

[Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges](#), Cambridge University Press

[Expositor’s Greek Testament](#), W. Robertson Nicoll, George H. Doran Co.

[Barnes Notes on the Old and New Testaments](#), Albert Barnes, Baker Books

[Thayer’s Greek Lexicon of the New Testament](#), Joseph Thayer, Hendrickson Publishers

[New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible with Hebrew:Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries](#), Lochman Foundation

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www.blueletterbible.com www.gotquestions.org www.bible.org www.qbible.com www.hebrew4christians.com

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