

# Don't Lose Your Saltiness

Luke 14:25-35

## Introduction

What's the big deal about salt? I mean, after all, it's common, isn't it? So, I looked it up. There are more than 14,000 uses for salt. Here are a few I didn't know about: It can remove pinfeathers from poultry, clean the smell off your hands after chopping onions, make milk stay fresh longer, remove burned food odor from ovens and stoves, brighten faded colors in your clothes, remove sweat stains, relieve swollen feet and ankles, clean sinuses, drip-proof candles, and absorb shoe odor. But what does it mean for us, as Christians, to be salty?

## Salt in the Bible

To answer that question, we must understand what Jesus' audience would have known and understood about salt. How was salt used in the Bible?

### Salt as Covenant

First, salt was used in the Covenant. **Numbers 18:19** says: *All the holy contributions that the people of Israel present to the Lord I give to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due. It is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord for you and your offspring with you.* Salt makes things last longer. The covenant was forever. Salt shows us that God intends for His covenant with us to be forever.

### Symbol of Friendship and Loyalty

All 26 verses of **Psalm 136** end with the refrain: *for His steadfast love endures forever.* Not only does salt make things last longer, it also never changes. You can dissolve salt in water, and it will appear to have changed, to disappear. But boil the water away, or let it evaporate and you will find the salt again. It will still be there; it will still be salt. It hasn't changed. God doesn't change. That He doesn't change means His love endures forever. It means His Word doesn't change. What was true yesterday is true today and will be true tomorrow. Isn't that comforting to know?

### Salt Adds Flavor

We say that salt adds flavor. That may be the most common use for it, a seasoning. But the addition of salt doesn't **add** flavor as much as it **brings out the flavor** of what's being seasoned by it. As salt brings out the flavor of foods, we are to bring out the best in others. We do this when we follow St. Paul's advice in **Colossians 4**: *Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person (Colossians 4:6).*

### Salt as a Preservative

As we said above, salt makes things last longer. It is used to preserve food. This was especially true in Bible times, before refrigeration. Jesus Christ is salt: He preserves life, sustains life, and is faithful to His promises.

## Salt as a Valuable Mineral

**Leviticus 2** tells us the people were to include salt in their offerings: *You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. You shall not let the salt of the covenant be missing from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt (Leviticus 2:13)*. Salt was a valuable commodity. It was expensive and hard to come by. You couldn't run down to Wal-Mart and buy a box of it off the shelf. When we see salt used in sacrifices, it shows how God uses the valuable to signify His promises. When Jesus calls us salt, it shows how valuable we are to Him. After all, He bought us with His blood.

## Salt & Manure

Jesus says that if salt loses its saltiness, it's of no use for the manure pile. I always wondered how salt could be used on a manure pile. What does salt have to do with manure? Then I came across this tidbit, *salt breaks down manure for better absorption and prevents dunghills from rotting and becoming useless*. This ties in with us being the salt of the earth. When Jesus says in **Matthew 5:13**: *"You are the salt of the earth,"* He wants us to be fertilizer salt.

## How to Become Salty

How can we be salty in the first place? We mentioned characteristics like not changing, preserving, and sustaining life. These are out of our league. They are things that only apply to Christ, to God. The key is in **Mark 9** (Read **Mark 9:49-50**). Jesus says, *"Everyone will be salted with fire."* He is the One who makes us salty. Cyril of Alexandria said: *"Let there be salt in you", that is, the divine words that bring salvation. If we despise these, we become tasteless, foolish, and utterly useless.*

## Means of Grace

It is the Word that saves us. It is the Word that, working through us, can work in the world. For us to be salty is to hear the Word and be changed by it. Then, we spread that Word to those around us. When we hear the Word and receive the Sacrament, God makes us salt, so that we can share His Word with the world around us and be salty. Remember, it is God's Word that preserves, doesn't change, lasts forever, brings out the best in people, sustains life, and fulfills His promises. **DON'T LOSE YOUR SALTINESS**—don't lose the Word of God.

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*And the peace of God,  
Which surpasses all understanding,  
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

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