

TEXT: Matthew 5:13

THEME: SALTY SAINTS

**“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men” (Matthew 5:13). NIV**

Dear Christian Friends:

**“The large crowd listened to him with delight” (Mark 12:37).** Every public speaker would love to have that said of him or her. Well, this was said of Jesus, the Evangelist Mark tells us, and it was a great compliment. It was said, in part, because Jesus used common, everyday illustrations that helped the people understand what he was saying. Those illustrations work for us as well.

Jesus says we are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. That means we are to be separate and different from the world. The Lord tells us: **“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you” (2 Corinthians 6:17).** The Lord also tells us: **“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2a).**

Separation is not isolation (like a monk), but rather insulation. Jesus said we are in the world, but not of it. So, don't be conformed to the world, but rather “confront” the world. We do this, Jesus tells us in his Sermon on the Mount, by being salt and light.

With the help of the Holy Spirit today, we ask: ARE YOU A SALTY SAINT?

Did you know that salt is a miracle? It's composed of 2 poisons: chloride and sodium. If you ingest either by itself, you'll die. But put them together and you have common, ordinary salt, and that which used to bring death somehow comes together to bring life, and that's a miracle!

So it is by nature with every human life on this earth. We are born into this world poisoned by sin, with death looming in the shadows because of our sin, and an eternity of hell as just punishment for our wanton disobedience to God. But our sin and death are confronted by the grace of God in the death of his Son, Jesus, and those two negatives merge to form a positive redemption!

So, what does Jesus mean by calling us salt in his illustration?

SALT IRRITATES (in a wound). And Christianity rubs many people the wrong way because it is irritating to their wounds of sin. When we are around people who want

to engage in sin, and we don't, that makes them feel guilty, because by nature they know that what they are doing is wrong. We remind them of that, and they don't like it. We should not purposefully try to be irritating, but we should not be surprised when it happens. And we dare not go along with sin, just to "keep the peace."

**SALT SEASONS.** My brother loves salt so much, that he may or may not decide to add some food under it when he's eating! I'm the opposite. It's all what you get used to.

We Christians ought to add zest and tang and some good flavor wherever we go. Your workplace should be better because you're present with good-natured, hard, and honest work. You may be the only Christian in your house, but you should be having a positive effect with your gentleness, kindness, and love. Kids, your public school and our Lutheran elementary school need some salt, and you can be the one by being a friend to everyone, by doing your own work on time, and by respecting school property and your teachers.

Everywhere Jesus went on this earth a good spirit followed, and overtook those in attendance, which always grew, and some even had to enter through the roof! Some Christians think they have to be bland to live a godly life, but that's not true. Of all people, we have every reason to be fun-loving, good-natured, and happy. We are the winners! We are the champions! We are the victors! We get to wear a crown of glory for all eternity! That should make us happy, no matter our temporary earthly circumstances may be. So, early in the worship service, after you have confessed your sins and heard that your sins are forgiven, you should feel good...and it's okay to show it, to smile. After you have received Holy Communion and heard that your sins are forgiven, you should feel cheerful (I remind you of that each time I give you Holy Communion) and it is okay for you to show it, to smile.

**CUE 24—flash—SALT CREATES THIRST.** And our job as Christians is to make others thirsty for God. In John 4, Jesus compared himself to a drink of living water. But we won't create thirst unless we are a salty saint...living our everyday lives in accordance with God's Word. We also have to be 'out there'...in other words, not just living our Christianity here in church, which is the 'shaker,' but getting the salt out of the shaker, and living as forgiven children of God every day of the week, even when it's not popular to do so! Like a zebra in a herd of horses...a salty saint will stand out, and get noticed, and make others long for something different as well.

**CUE 25—flash—SALT CLEANSSES AND HEALS.** Salt in a water softener cleans the lime deposits out. A salty law and gospel will convict and cleanse people of the deposits of sin. As salty saints, our words and our lives are to share the wonderful good news that Jesus has done everything for our salvation: lived a perfect life in our place, died the death we deserved, and given us the Holy Spirit who worked

saving faith in us through the means of grace, the gospel in the Word and sacrament. We need to let others know that God has cleaned and healed us and them of dirt and disease of sin through Jesus.

**CUE 26—flash—**SALT PRESERVES. Our society today is rotting and decaying because there is less and less true Christian salt being shaken on it.

Just look at music over the last 50 years. It used to be that Dick Clark's *American Bandstand* was considered the music of rebellion. But look at MTV today, and you'll think Dick Clark was a Sunday school teacher!

Look at movies and TV. One cuss word brought people up in arms at the end of *Gone with the Wind*, but today's kids' cartoons have more than that!

Ricky and Lucy, who were married on their TV show and in real life, had to be shown with separate beds in their bedroom. Today marriage has nothing to do with sex and...well, just don't look at how it is today!

Humanism and evolution defy the established laws of nature and science, and say that we are getting better and better, but the truth is that we are spiraling downward.

The Bible promises the trend is downward...so, why even try? Because, it's our duty to stem the tide; it is who we are as children of God. We need to be salty saints who do what's right and take a stand at work when the plan is to be 'shady.' We need to be salty saints when it comes to the abortion holocaust, pornography, homosexuality and gay marriage, and so much more. We cannot save the world, but we can save one here and one there...our children and grandchildren, our friends and neighbors, and those our missionaries can reach.

**CUE 27—flash—**Jesus has made you and me the salt of the earth. We need to get the salt out of the shaker—the church—and into our everyday lives. This week and always, let us be SALTY SAINTS. Amen.

## Prayer of the church

Lord God, heavenly Father, we delight in your righteousness, truth, and mercy. For the clarity of your laws and the generosity of your gospel promises, we give you humble and hearty thanks.

You desire that we, your children, be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We confess, O Lord, that we do not measure up to your expectations. We have often failed to let the light of our faith shine to your honor and glory. Nor have we always been the cleansing salt in our society. We have pointed accusing fingers at those who commit violence, while failing to recognize that the hatred in our own hearts is just as abhorrent to your righteousness. We have tried to make peace with you before being reconciled with brother or sister, mother or father, son or daughter. In the name of our compassionate Savior, we beg forgiveness.

May our sick know the power of your healing, and the lonely the comfort of your presence.

May the spiritually hungry be fed with the Bread of heaven, and may the disheartened and the downcast hear the Gospel. This we ask in the name of our compassionate Savior, who has taught us to pray:

**THE LORD'S PRAYER.**