

## Salt and Light

Pastor Ken

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Welcome to God's family at Bethel Life Center, Wichita, Kansas. Thank you to the team that makes this weekend experience with God, amazing! Whether you are in the sanctuary or watching online, welcome! Welcome if you are...

At the lake. On-line in California, Washington, or on the east coast. Danice and I love you. We want God's best for you and believe that joining us for this series, Salt and Light will offer you God's best and God's blessing.

So, let's welcome our on-line community whether watching in real time, or later in the day, or week. You matter to us, each one of you. If you missed the start of our series: Salt and Light, you could go back and watch it and catch up. So, stand and let's read God's word.

*<sup>13</sup> "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. (Matt 5:13-NKJV)*

*Can food that is tasteless be eaten without salt?  
Or is there any taste in the white of an egg? (Job 6:6-NET)*

Father, we know so little about you. We know so little about Jesus' power - **so teach us.**

Father, we need so much. We need forgiveness of sins and healing of our bodies - **so touch us.**

And Father we have a long way to go before we are like Jesus - **so transform us.**

Teach us. Touch us. Transform us. In the Name that is above all names - Jesus of Nazareth. Everyone said, "Amen."

So, the state song of Georgia, is GEORGIA ON MY MIND. This song was popularized by Ray Charles. As I thought about this recently, I thought, if all you have is Georgia on your mind, you ought to get out more.

You obviously haven't been to Maui, Nepal, Seattle or the Rockies in Colorado. If you think Georgia, is it, come on. Which leads to a question that I am going to come back and ask you repeatedly during this message.

Question: What do you mostly have on your mind these days?

Who are what do you mostly have on your mind? You can tell a lot about a person by what is on their mind.

**\*Think back to the first time you fell in love.** Some of you are going, that is really distant. For some of you that is a little fresher. Remember, you couldn't think of anyone else. You just had this guy or this gal on your mind all the time.

Now, romance is not the only activity that can occupy someone's mind.

**\*I've known parents that when they have their first child,** that's all they have on their mind. The well-being of that first child. An ACORN can fall to the ground, in the back yard, in the middle of the night and both of them are up. Wondering if the baby is OK.

## **YOU CAN TELL A LOT ABOUT A PERSON BY WHAT IS ON THEIR MIND.**

By what is always on their mind. Who or what is always on your mind these days?

Now, we could fill your mind with terror and tell you that we know what is on your mind and we are going to put it up on the screen. For everyone to see. Don't worry, we don't have that technology. Wish we did.

If Jesus were standing here today in the flesh, he is here by his Spirit. You felt him in worship. You have felt the work of his spirit already in the service.

If he were here today and you could ask him personally, Jesus what's on your mind?

He wouldn't say-Georgia.

First century-Betty Lou

Business gains. Money or Fame.

He would simply say, “what’s on my mind, is what’s always been on my mind-PEOPLE. Throughout history. During my ministry. PEOPLE.

Jesus always had people on his mind, what about YOU?

That’s it. It would have been his theme song - **People on my mind**. Lost people. Found people. Young people. Old people. Rich and poor people. Jewish people. Indian people. Mexican people. Hindu people. Islamic people. ISIS people. Neglected and discarded people.

People of every race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nobody has displayed a greater preoccupation with people in all of human history than Jesus Christ. Never has anyone ever displayed a greater interest in people in all of human history like Jesus Christ.

And Jesus wants each of us, to have people on our mind, as our driving and all-consuming thought. That is why Jesus uses the salt and light illustration. Jesus first series of sermons, on the Sea of Galilee tells his early followers, You Are the Salt of the Earth. You Are the Light of the World.

<sup>13</sup> *“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? <sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. (Matt 5-NIV)*

God has a plan to change the world. He does this through churches. Not just Bethel, but churches all over the world. Another way to say it is, why did God place the church in the earth? Or “what is the purpose of the church?”

Every weekend in the United State about **One Hundred and Twenty million** people go to church. Go to a worship service. Let me put that in perspective.

More people in America will go to a church service on one single weekend, than people who attend every single professional sporting event in America in an entire year.

More people will go to church, than go to all sporting events combined. Wow! Let that sink in. So, today I want to ask the big question: Why?

Why do they do this? What is the benefit? Why are over 2 billion people in the world a member or attend a church? Almost in every tongue. Certainly, in every country.

What are the benefits? What is the payoff? Why get out of bed and go to a church service when you could stay home in your pajamas and watch online?

How would you answer that question? Having been a pastor for over 40 years, I know that some people who attend a church service have no clear reason or understanding as why they are attending.

That might be a little shocking for some of you. Is it really possible that some have no idea why they are really there?

I am sure that some of those people who attend church around the world do so out of habit.

Some may attend out of **duty**.

Some may attend out of **guilt**.

Some may attend out of **tradition**.

Some may attend out of being **pressured**.

Some want to find **God**; some want to find a **girl**.

If someone asked you, why are you a part of a church family, what reasons would you give?

What would you say? The next couple of weeks, that question will be answered for you at Bethel. **We attend to be Jesus hands and feet extended.**

In the days ahead, Bethel Life Center, which is made up of 100's of people, is going to launch out into one of our most ambitious and loving outreaches into our community that we have ever attempted.

It starts with the exciting and life-changing summer camp for abused kids called Royal Family Kid Camp. I have personally been involved in some way, as a pastor or participant in RFKC, as it is often called, since 1990. I was the pastor who started the 4<sup>th</sup> RFKC, in San Diego, CA.

It is going to be an exciting adventure for so many kids and staff. You will hear more about that at the end of the service, and we will pray over the team.

Then Bethel will launch year 10 of Convoy of Hope, Wichita. 10 sites. Over 10,000 guests and over 1000 volunteers. And we do all of this because Jesus calls us to be salt and light.

10 years. 10 sites. 10,000 plus guests. And over 1000 volunteers.

Jesus tells his followers and us, "I am planning to rescue this world, from its current state of decay, decline and destruction and the solution is to shake out some salt."

Jesus calls every follower of His to be salt and light. So, you might be thinking...when do I shake out some salt? Remember, you are a transform carrier. And a transform caster. You are to be a transformation caster. What you have experienced in Christ, you are to help others experience in the form of God's love, God's forgiveness, and God's healing.

So, your life has been changed, to help other people's life to be changed. You are not the end of the story, you are a link in a chain, and as salt and light, you are contributing to adding other links in the chain.

You are changed, and this gives you the confidence that others can be changed. Nothing in life bring as much satisfaction as being salt and light.

I believe to my toes, that everyone's life would be better, if Christ were in the center of it. So, why are you here? To be salt seasoning that brings out the God-flavors in others.

You are not just bringing out the God-flavors(salt), you are to bring out the God-colors (light). More about that next week. You are to change your world. Jesus has called you to be a change agent.

Jesus said, salt make things better. When do I shake out some salt?

When people hurt enough, they want to change. People want salt, when they hurt enough, they want to change. When people experience pain, they will often look to God for relief. And you can be there to be his grace.

When people see enough, they are inspired to change. People want salt when they are inspired to change. Many are inspired to change when they see or hear of inspirational events like Royal Family Kids Camp, Convoy of Hope, or our Thanksgiving community meal.

When people learn enough, and they desire to change. People want salt when they learn enough, and they desire to change. Some people have been investigating Christ, and you come along and close the sale.

*<sup>13</sup> "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 underfoot. (Matt 5-NIV)*

Jesus is calling followers not to be silent.

Not to be stagnant.

And not to be insipid. (flavorless)

To not be passive. Irrelevant in our faith.

\*Jesus calls us to be engaged in our culture.

\*Jesus calls us to promote biblical values, everywhere we go.

\*To speak the truth in love, against decay and against darkness.

\*Either decay will be reversed, and darkness will be dispelled, or it will not. But at least you provide an opportunity for a reversal of decay and darkness. Wherever and whenever we can.

Some will listen to Jesus, some will listen in this room and say, “**not for me.**”

But I know most of you, and you have already said, “yes to the challenge to flavor and illuminate a decaying and dark world.”

So, let’s look at the properties of salt, and see if we can connect it to the influence and impact you can have as a **transformation carrier** and **transformation caster**.

Salt is a valuable mineral. In Jesus day, salt was a rare and precious mineral. Today we take salt for granted. Don’t take too much salt. Roman soldiers were paid with salt. They spoke Latin in the time of Christ and *salarium*, a word connected to salt is where we get our word for salary. \$\$

If you spilled salt, it was a shameful and a disgraceful thing. You might google this, when Leonardo DaVinci painted the last supper, he painted Judas knocking over the salt cellar (shaker). DaVinci saw his betrayal as shameful.

**14,000 uses of salt.**

A quick review of uses: Soothe bee stings. Stop a grease fire. Kill poison ivy. Kill grass growing in the driveway cracks. Deodorize your shoes.

Old Testament offerings came with salt. Salt was an OT symbol of a covenant with God.

*Season all of your grain with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant out of your grain offerings, add salt to all your offerings. (Lev. 2:13-NIV)*

Salt is needed to sustain life. Depleted salt or sodium levels in the body, puts the person at risk, it can even result in death. Also, salt was needed to cure meat and make leather. If you had no meat, or went without shoes, life was made hard. Fighting battles always meant that salt was needed in large quantities for an army.

Salt has purifying and healing qualities. Salt is purifying and healing. Salt is a good antiseptic. In Ezekiel 16:4, it tells us that babies were covered with salt at birth, to disinfect the body from germs. A lot less sterilized birthing quarters, so salt protected the child. You could say like curing a ham, the baby was cured.

Salt is a preservative. Salt slows the bacterial build up, used to preserve meat. Salt is used to preserve the freshness of food. MSG is used in restaurants. We pickle fruits and vegetables to give them shelf life. Shelf life can be for months or even years. I took beef jerky to Ethiopia and gave it as a gift.

Salt is a source of nourishment. Or flavor enhancing. Salt on foods releases flavor or nourishment by breaking down the cell walls of vegetables, fruits, and meats. Allowing the natural flavors to be enjoyed. Salt is abundant in trace minerals that provide health, vigor, and nourishment.

Jesus plan for your life is to be salt seasoning. For you to change your world. Not change the world. But your world.

When they asked Mother Teresa, how do you change the world? "One person at a time", she stated. You start with one.

So, why not start this week, and be ready to season your world with salt. Pray for the opportunity. Be ready with grace filled speech. And season it with salt.

*<sup>6</sup>Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer everyone. (Col 4:6-NET)*

What is our lead card? Grace. Unconditional love. Jesus used the salt illustration because salt requires potency and proximity.

God's word is filled with all kinds of challenges about arranging our lives so that we can have the maximum spiritual influence on family and friends. Our responsibility is to shake out salt, God's part is to produce results in the form of God's flavors.

*2 Kings 7:9, then they said to each other, "what we are doing in not right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves." ( 2 Kings 7:9-NIV)*

The greatest sermon ever, the sermon on the mount, wants Jesus followers to see themselves as salt and light in how you live out your life.



Again, salt adds flavor, creates thirst, and holds back decay. When you are listening to the Holy Spirit and living with a sense of the salt and light purpose, this creates thirst in those around you.

When you live with authenticity, believe your story can change lives and live with boldness, you can't help but shake out salt.

When you live as salt, you are challenging the decay effect of sin.

You take a stand against racism.

You advocate for the unborn.

You care deeply about the poor, homeless and mentally and emotionally troubled.

God wants to use you, to stop the tide of evil in the world.

Anybody for that?

Your impact as salt includes the following elements.

Potency-strong concentration of Christ's influence.

Proximity-close vicinity for Christ's influence.

When salt is shaken out, it will be potent. This means your influence will have a strong concentration of God's grace, love, presence, and power that will be available for all who want it.

But we need to get close enough, to people so they can receive this grace. This is where proximity comes in. We need to get close enough to people God loves, and need his grace, in order that his power and presence have its intended impact.

My prayer is that your savor factor will increase, as you open yourself up to greater potency and proximity.