

Salt and Light

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You are not just salt and light, you are salt and light of Christ's character and commission. **Do you think Jesus is ok, with you going unnoticed?** Two truths from last week. The sermon on the mount is Jesus longest sermon. And this is the only time he used metaphors to describe you and me. Ok, let's read together.

¹³ *"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 5:13-NIV)*

¹³ *"Let me tell you why you are here".* Jesus tells us that you are here to change your world. To be salt and light. To be a transformation carrier, and transformation caster. **Mark those words, carrier and caster.**

You are here to be salt...and that salt it is not about you, it is about bringing out the God-flavors of the earth. *You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. (MSG)*

What are the salt flavors? Just as salt comes in a variety of flavors, God brings out the God-flavors of his grace through you! (Fruit of the Spirit, Beatitudes, Holy Spirit empowerment). Let me show you what I am saying.

First, some salt varieties. **Then**, God-flavors of salt.

1. Kosher Salt-Kosher salt is a type of coarse-grained salt that is less refined, which means that it is almost pure sodium chloride and is not ionized. Because of its large grains, kosher salt is good for seasoning meats, poultry, and salad, so basically everything besides baking.

2. Table Salt-Table salt is the most common type of salt for cooking sold in grocery stores, and most people think of it as the default salt. However, table salt is a less natural variety of salt, as it is processed and loses its minerals, it also contains iodine and anticaking agents.

3. Sea Salt-Sea salt is harvested by evaporating seawater. Generally, it is less processed than table salt and it may keep its traces of minerals. This salt is good for “finishing” or sprinkling because of its irregular flakes, as it provides a good contrast to the dish you’re making.

4. Pink Salt-Pink salt comes from rock crystals of salt that are extracted from areas close to the Himalayas. It is composed mainly of sodium and other trace elements, including iron and zinc. Pink salt is attractive because of its pink color, and it has a saltier flavor compared to table salt.

5. Black Salt-Black salt is also referred to as Kala Namak salt, which is a type of rock salt that is harvested from volcanic rock salt from the Himalayas, usually Pakistan. This salt is rich in iron, magnesium, and calcium, as well as a few other trace elements. Black salt has a very pungent odor and flavor and is therefore used in small quantities.

You’re here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. (Matt 5:13-MSG)

So, what are the God-flavors Jesus is referring to? He mentioned in Matt 5:3-12. The Sermon on the Mount starts out with 8 supernatural God-flavors you are becoming, if want to be a follower of Christ.

Jesus is telling his new recruits, Peter and Andrew, John and James, and the crowd that day, this faith is not a private faith, the lifestyle you are called on to live will attract attention. Will attract followers. Will attract haters.

Followers of Christ declare they are spiritually bankrupt. I’ve got nothing. *Blessed are the poor in spirit.*

Blessed are they who mourn. Their heart breaks for the things that break the heart of God.

Blessed are the meek. They do not fight for their rights. They are humble and gentle.

Blessed are the merciful. God wants you to show mercy in this world. Jesus is saying, “there is not enough mercy in the world.”

Blessed are the pure in heart. Jesus is showing us a pattern for getting close to God. And experiencing God’s power, presence, and God’s pardon.

Blessed are the peacemakers. God’s children are the first to lend a hand at peacemaking to those who are cantankerous, contentious, and conflicted.

There are God flavors that live in you and are supposed **to be poured out, shaken out of a saltshaker.** Do you think Jesus is ok, with you going unnoticed?

It is one of the most unique, mysterious, and unusual houses in the US. It is called the Winchester Mystery House. Located about an hour south of San Francisco, in the suburb of San Jose, it is one of America’s most unusual tourist attractions.

You ask, “why is that?” The estate was built by Sarah L. Winchester who started building the house after her late husband, William Wirt Winchester died leaving her one of the richest women in the world. The story has a dark side to it because Sarah thought she was cursed.

She was certain that relocating was the only way to evade the spirits that plagued her. In 1886, she left her home in New Haven, CT, for a new life in San Jose, CA. There, she bought a simple eight-room farmhouse that she would go on to transform into a marvelous, 160-room mansion that came to be referred to as the Winchester Mystery House.

The sheer size of the House is the first thing you notice when you arrive. However, that is the least remarkable thing about this mansion. Sarah thought that continuous building would appease the evil spirits of those killed by the famous “gun that won the west.” In the end she had hoped this would lead to eternal life.

Sarah kept the hammers pounding 24-hours a day, until her death. The house is known for so many unexplained construction oddities that it gained the name Winchester Mystery House.

Besides the 160 rooms, it had 2,000 doors, with many leading to the oddest of locations. One opens to a sheer 15-foot drop into an outdoor garden. If you step through another door, you will land eight feet below in a kitchen sink.

Some of the staircases in this home are truly peculiar. Instead of taking you to another floor, they lead right into the ceiling. There is a vast network of secret passages twisting throughout the property.

One cabinet door opens to a hive of 30 additional rooms. Many visitors are fascinated by the vast collection of windows—more than 10,000 panes—and the fact that some of the loveliest Tiffany-stained glass is hidden away where no light can reach it.

*A house with purposeless design. 47 fireplaces.

*A house with much activity, but almost no function. 40 staircases.

*A house that you not only get lost in, but you also get confused in, stairs that lead to ceilings, windows that decorate the floor and doors that open to blank walls.

Day in and day out construction features excessive creative, wasted cost, expense and busyness, blueprints do not define success, but busyness defines success.

Perhaps you have figured out where I am going with this. Is it possible the Winchester Mystery House accurately describes so many in the church today, doing everything but making little impact as salt and light.

Do you think Jesus is ok, with you going unnoticed?

Amazing activity those Christians are engaging in, but it doesn't seem to lead to God's commission, of being salt and light. Like a house that stands as a monument to meaningless activity, but not to purposeful action.

God even gives a warning in our text, about those Christ followers, like the mystery house, that are a mystery as to what they are really doing. And why?

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 5:13-NIV)

Let me make it blindingly clear, what the Christian life is all about, just in case you are one of those busy, purposeless Christ followers confused about what it is you should be doing. And since God has left you on the earth, another day, you should know this!!

God wants us to help others know Christ, find freedom in Christ, discover your purpose, and make a difference in your world.

Redeemed by Christ.
Find Freedom in Christ.
Discover Your Purpose.
Make a Difference in Your World.

In fact, why don't I just put it on the screen, and let's declare this out loud.

Redeemed by Christ.
Find Freedom in Christ.
Discover Your Purpose.
Make a Difference in Your World.

I was about 22, when I really became a fully forgiven (**not fully devoted**) follower of Jesus Christ. Although, I had brushes with faith, church, and God, earlier in my life this would be the occasion that conversion to Christ really took hold.

In college, 4 decades ago, at Western Washington University, Bellingham, I not only found Christ, but I also started serving him and being transformed daily into the image of Christ. I noticed in the first days that it really mattered to me that my friends, in college, and my friends back at home had the same experience that I had.

You see I had encountered the Christ of 2 Cor 5:17, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the **new** creation has come”. The old has gone, the **new** is here! (NIV)*

Now, this idea of **new**, carries with it two meanings, and both apply to the new Christ follower. **First, new in time.**

There is a point in time when you know that you are born again, to use the language of John 4, and Nicodemus. There was a point in time when I could point to this supernatural event happening in my life. New birth. **New in time.**

Second, new in kind. How do I know if that has happened to me pastor? This describes the second meaning of the word, **new in kind.** And here are the qualities of my **new in kind**, type of faith.

For me, those early days of my faith in Jesus were characterized by (1) worship that needed to happen all the time. My (2) bible reading began to come alive because the Holy Spirit was speaking to me as I read. And finally, I wanted to (4) gather with believers and (5) tell those outside of Christ, what had happened to my life.

All I knew from that day forward, when I went to my classes at Western, I felt like **I was a transformational carrier.** I was a carrier of transformation. I used every platform in my business degree to talk about my transformation in Christ. I made collages of my life, for one of my assignments and presented Christ in the center of the collage, explaining my newfound transformation.

I talked with people in the library about Christ. I witnessed to people in my dorm. I played Christian music while I studied, so people would know **I was a transformation carrier.**

Instead of playing, Queen, Another One Bites Dust, I played Leon Patillo, a newly minted Christ follower from the group Santana, Dance, Children, Dance or JESUS.

Instead of playing Ventura Highway or Sister Golden Hair by America, I played newly minted follower Dan Peak's new Christian version from America, Sister Golden Hair.

No, I was not into Amy Grant, Evie or Chuck Girard. I needed Christian rock and roll, by people like Joe English, the drummer of Paul McCartney and Wings, who had just found Christ, like Leon Patillo, Dan Peak and Joe English, they all became a Christ about the time I did.

And I wanted those in my dorm to know it. To hear it. And to experience it. I was committed to being the Salt of the Earth. The Light of the World. **I was a transformation carrier.** But it did not stop there. I soon **became a transformation caster.**

It did not take long in my Christian life to know, that was just the beginning and I needed to go to the next stage of my growth. Look at the screen and you can see the movement in my life.

When I became a Christian, I saw myself as a transformation carrier. Then I realized I was to be a transformation caster.

I discovered it was not enough to carry the good news of Jesus atoning death, but I was to be a transformation caster. What I had experienced I wanted others to experience Christ transforming power.

So, my life was changed to help other people's lives be changed. I was not the end of the story, I was only a part of the story, it did not end with me, but it continued.

And knowing that I was changed, gave me the confidence that others could be changed. And it gave me the passion to help them be changed.

Now, this catalyst for change really started when I began reading the book of Matthew. I can still remember, sitting in my small intern office, pouring over the sermon on the Mount and reading...

¹³ *"You are the salt of the earth.*

When I landed on this passage, I began to really wonder, could I really do what Jesus is asking those early followers to do? This is Jesus first teaching to his young recruits who are putting away their nets to follow a carpenter from Nazareth.

James and John, Peter and Andrew, are sitting in the crowd that day on the hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee, and hearing Jesus give **his mission statement** right up front. His all people matter to God statement. ***You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.***

Jesus wants these young recruits to live out their faith in the marketplace, the workplace and in the education space. This is the gold standard for those who want to follow Jesus.

And Jesus begins by saying, “I am planning to impact and rescue this world, from its current **state of decay**, the solution is salt and light, and I plan to impact and rescue the world from its current **state of darkness**, solution is salt and light. “

To many Christians live as if it is all about just getting to heaven, we are also called to influence and impact this world for Christ. As salt and light. Ok, I think the Holy Spirit has made that point blindingly clear today. So how do you influence and impact? How do you rescue from decay and darkness?

When you think about salt, do you think Jesus is ok, with you going unnoticed? No. Can salt go unnoticed when it flavors food?

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 on this day, 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 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 seller, shaker. DaVinci saw his betrayal as shameful. **14,000 uses of salt**. Old Testament offerings came with salt. Salt was an OT symbol of a covenant with God.

Salt is needed to sustain life. Depleted salt or sodium levels in the body, puts the person at risk, 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 the food and treat the leather for walking.

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, 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. That is a little big.

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

When do people want salt-seasoning? There are seasons of a person’s life, when they are the most open to you being salt seasoning in their life. We get this picture in Eccl 3, there is a time to laugh and a time to mourn. A time to be born, a time to die. A time to tear and a time to mend.

God uses you as salt, to attract people to want a change. Jesus assumed you were salt. Not you will be salt. You are the salt of the earth.

You make things better.

You heal.

You preserve.

You are valuable.

You nourish.

When are people in the world and on earth most open to salt? To your invaluable love? To your healing prayers? To your preserving conversations? To your nourishing friendships?

When people hurt enough, they want to change. People are open to your salt-seasoning influence when they hurt enough, they want to change.

When people see enough, they are inspired to change. People are open to your salt-seasoning influence when they are inspired to change.

When people learn enough, and they desire to change. People are open to your salt-seasoning influence when they desire to change.

So, let me ask the question again, do you think Jesus is ok, with your going unnoticed. When you think about salt, do you think Jesus is ok, with you going unnoticed? NO!

Jesus followers are not to be silent, but to be seasoning. When people say, I am a Christian, but I don’t want people to notice. I don’t want to be bothered. I don’t want to interact with those godless people. Faith is just private for me. I don’t want to be noticed.

So, I want to ask you about Jesus' announcement that you are salt. When you think about salt. Do you think Jesus means he wants you to go unnoticed? NO.

It is impossible. Can salt go unnoticed when it flavors food? Can salt go unnoticed when it heals and repairs from sickness? Can salt go unnoticed when it preserves meat? Can salt go unnoticed when it offers nourishment? Can salt go unnoticed when it has great value? NO.

Jesus is calling us not to be silent. Not be embarrassed. To not be irrelevant. Be engaged. Promote biblical values. Speak the truth. To live for Jesus. That is salt. You are salt. Heal. Preserve. Nourish.

Father,

I declare my faith is not about just getting me to heaven, but holding out a salt-seasoning faith that will deliver people from destruction, decay, and darkness.

Today I am asking you Father to return to my life, all the salt properties that have disappeared, decayed, and diminished.

I welcome the opportunity to be salt-seasoning that brings out your God-flavors of grace. I join your followers in Matthew 5, to be the salt of the earth. In Jesus Name.

Amen.