

“CHRISTIANS AS SALT OF THE EARTH”

(Matthew 5:13)

Matthew 5:13 (NKJV) “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.”

INTRODUCTION

The Sermon on the Mount is the manifesto of the kingdom. It is Jesus unveiling the character, calling, and responsibilities of those who belong to Him.

The Beatitudes reveal what we *are internally*; the metaphor of salt reveals what we *must be externally* [A metaphor is when Jesus uses salt to represent something else—in this case, the life and influence of Christians. He is not saying believers are literal salt. He is using salt as a symbol to teach a spiritual truth].

After declaring who is blessed, Jesus immediately declares who is **useful**. He moves from **identity** to **responsibility**, from **character** to **impact**.

And the first metaphor He uses is startlingly simple yet brutally honest: “You are the salt of the earth...” (**Matthew 5:13**).

Jesus did not say, “Try to be salt.” He did not say, “Pray to become salt.” He did not say, “Act like salt sometimes.”

When Christ said that His disciples are the salt of the earth, He

was saying something complimentary about His followers and something derogatory about the earth.

Without Jesus, life on earth is dull, bland, and boring. Many non-Christians are not aware of the emptiness of their lives as they rush from one activity to another and take no time to think.

Someday, when forced to slow down by illness or the approach of death, they will have to face the meaninglessness of their existence.

Only a right relationship with Jesus can bring genuine and lasting zest to their lives.

Jesus declared a **fact**: *If we are in the kingdom, we ARE salt—and salt must function.*

The brutal fact is this: *A Christian who refuses to influence the world is as useless as tasteless salt—still called salt, but no longer valuable.*

Today, we will explore what it means to be the salt of the earth, why Jesus chose this metaphor, how salt functions spiritually, and how we must live out this mandate in a practical and impactful way.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

In the ancient world, salt was precious—sometimes more valuable than gold.

The Roman senator Pliny (A.D. 62–c. 115) wrote, “*Nothing is more useful than salt and sunshine.*”¹

Roman soldiers were sometimes paid in salt (from which we get the word *salary*).

1 Natural History 31.102. Quoted in D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 138.

Salt represented wealth, preservation, purity, covenant, and value.

Jesus deliberately chose something essential, valuable, and irreplaceable.

Jesus places salt after the Beatitudes to show that:

- The Beatitudes produce inner transformation.
- Salt produce outward influence.

Sometimes we hear people say, “*I am not what you see on the outside. If you saw an angry outburst, it was because I was provoked. Deep inside, I am a very gentle and patient person.*”

Brethren, that is not true. What we truly carry on the inside is what eventually manifests on the outside.

Actions are the fruit of inward nature. Character expresses itself through conduct.

This is why Jesus began the Sermon on the Mount by addressing who we must become on the inside—the meek, the peacemakers, the pure in heart, the merciful.

He first shaped the inner man before speaking about our outward influence.

And now, in **Matthew 5:13**, He says, “*You are the salt of the earth.*”

In other words: *If the Beatitudes have transformed us internally, our outward life must reflect it visibly as a useful, impactful, God-glorifying vessel.*

We cannot influence the world externally if we have not been transformed internally.

Brethren, we have great work to do in our lives. If the inner man is truly changed, the outer life must show it.

If grace has worked within, transformation must appear without. God is calling us to be inwardly renewed so we can be outwardly influential for His glory.

Salt is used because the world is in moral and spiritual decay.

Salt only matters in a context of **corruption, rotting, and darkness.**

Jesus is saying: *The world is decaying, but we are its preservative. The world is tasteless, but we bring meaning. The world is corrupt, but you bring purity.*

This is the brutal reality of the Sermon on the Mount: *Kingdom people are not ornaments—they are agents of change.*

WHAT DOES SALT DO? — AND HOW THIS APPLIES TO CHRISTIANS

Below are **five major functions of salt**, each richly supported with Scripture and practical applications.

SALT PRESERVES — Christians Restrain Moral Decay

Jesus' words imply that the world is decaying. It is the nature of meat left to itself to spoil, and it is the nature of the world left to itself to deteriorate.

How corrupt can the world become? Read **Romans 1:18-32** and **2 Timothy 3:1-5**—or let's look around ourselves. Do we see lowered standards of morality, a general lack of honesty

In the ancient world salt was the *primary* preservative for meat. It kept corruption from spreading.

Today, the presence of righteous men and women slows down the deterioration of this sinful world and gives it time to repent before the earth is at last destroyed (**2 Peter 3:10**).

Spiritually, this means: *Christians slow down the decay of a sinful society.*

Without Christians:

- Truth collapses.
- Moral values rot.
- Families disintegrate.
- Wickedness spreads unchecked.

Supporting Scriptures

- **Genesis 18:23-32** – *God would have spared Sodom for 10 righteous people.*

- **Proverbs 14:34** – *Righteousness exalts a nation.*
- **2 Thessalonians 2:7** – *A restraining force limits lawlessness.*

Applications

We preserve by:

- Upholding righteousness at work.
- Refusing corruption in business.
- Walking in purity when others yield to immorality.
- Speaking truth in love and wisdom when the crowd celebrates deception.
- Protecting the vulnerable when society exploits them.

The brutal fact: *If Christians lose their preserving character, corruption becomes normal.*

Our presence must restrain decay.

SALT SEASONS — Christians Add Meaning, Flavour, and Beauty to Life

Salt makes food taste good. Without it, everything is bland.

"Brethren, when Jesus said 'You are the salt of the earth', He was not only talking about sodium crystals. He was talking about the function of salt—its ability to enhance flavour, preserve, purify, and bring out the best in whatever it touches.

Even in our modern kitchens, we understand this. There are times we cook and the food turns out sweet

even when you didn't add table salt. Why?

Because ingredients like **crayfish** carry natural salts and umami that awaken taste. In many of our soups—egusi, ogbono, okra, banga, beans porridge—if the crayfish is rich enough, the food will still be sweet. Some families cook whole meals with *only* crayfish as the seasoning, and the dish remains full of flavour.

So, notice something: **Even when salt is not added directly, a salt-like agent must still be present for the food to have taste.** Something must *perform the work* of salt.

That is exactly Jesus' point. The world may try different philosophies, new cultures, and modern lifestyles, but without the 'salt-function' of transformed believers, life remains tasteless, directionless, and empty.

Crayfish might substitute the physical salt in food, but **nothing substitutes the believer's influence in the world.**

Just as every pot of soup needs a flavour agent, every community needs righteous people.

Every workplace needs Christians who carry integrity.

Every family needs believers who preserve godliness.

Every generation needs men and women whose presence awakens the sweetness of God's purpose.

So when Jesus says, '*You are the salt of the earth,*' He is saying:

'Without us, something vital is missing. Without us, meaning fades. Without us, decay spreads. Without us, the flavour of God's kingdom will not be tasted in your environment.'

Brethren, may we never lose our saltiness, and may our presence always bring flavour, purity, and influence wherever we go in Jesus' Name, amen."

Jesus is saying: *The world is tasteless without kingdom people.*

Life becomes meaningful, rich, hopeful, and beautiful when believers function.

Supporting Scriptures

- **Colossians 4:6** – "Let your speech be seasoned with salt..."
- **Psalms 34:8** – "Taste and see that the Lord is good..."
- **1 Peter 3:15** – Speak with gentleness and respect.

Applications

We season the earth when we:

- Carry joy into difficult spaces.
- Speak words that heal, not destroy.
- Bring hope where despair reigns.
- Encourage, uplift, mentor, and inspire others.
- Make Christ attractive by your character.

The brutal fact: *A joyless, harsh, bitter Christian is a contradiction of the gospel.*

SALT PURIFIES — Christians Model Holiness in a Polluted World

Salt was associated with purity because of its cleansing properties.

Supporting Scriptures

- *Psalm 24:3-4* – Clean hands, pure heart.
- *Matthew 5:8* – “Blessed are the pure in heart.”
- *1 Timothy 4:12* – Be an example in conduct.

Applications

- Purity of heart
- Purity of motives
- Purity in relationships
- Purity in speech
- Purity in business transactions

The brutal fact: *A church without purity cannot purify the world.*

SALT CREATES THIRST — Christians Lead Others to Hunger for God

Salted food makes people thirsty.

Brethren, one of the most remarkable properties of salt is that **it provokes thirst.**

Eat a plate of well-seasoned food, enjoy roasted meat, lick a little salt on your palm—what happens next? *A desire rises inside you. Your body begins to crave water.*

Salt awakens thirst.

And this is part of what Jesus meant when He said: **‘You are the salt of the earth.’**

Not only should our lives preserve; they should also *provoke*. Our character should provoke a spiritual thirst in people who encounter us.

When the world tastes the grace in our life, they should begin to thirst for the God who transformed you.

When they taste our patience in the midst of provocation, when they taste our purity in a polluted generation, when they taste our

calmness in crisis, when they taste our joy under pressure, when they taste our integrity when others are cutting corners—something inside them should rise up saying: *‘I want to know the source of this person's strength. I want to drink from the God they serve.’*

This is why Jesus cried out in **John 7:37**, *‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.’*

Brethren, Jesus is the Water—but we are the salt that awakens the thirst for that Water.

A Christian who never makes anyone around them desire more of God is a Christian whose saltiness has diminished.

People should look at us and become thirsty for holiness. They should see our families and become thirsty for godly order.

They should observe our work ethics and become thirsty for excellence.

They should experience our compassion and become thirsty for Christlike love.

Salt does not preach a long sermon; it simply enters the food and performs its function.

In the same way, our life—our behaviour, our attitude, our spirit—should silently and consistently make others thirsty for God.

Brethren, may our lives never make people comfortable in sin.

May our presence never leave people spiritually neutral.

May our conduct never turn people away from Christ.

Instead, may the salt of God in us awaken a thirst in the hearts of men that draws them to the Living Water.

A Christian's life should provoke spiritual thirst in others.

Applications

When we live for Christ in sincerity:

- People ask questions.
- People desire what we have.
- People follow us to church.
- People admire our peace and self-control.
- People want the God we serve.

The brutal fact: *If no one around us wants more of God because of us, we have become tasteless and not useful and our salt content is low.*

SALT HEALS — Christians Bring Restoration Where There Is Brokenness

Salt was ancient medicine—it disinfects wounds.

Supporting Scriptures

- **2 Kings 2:19–22** – *Elisha uses salt to heal water.*
- **Galatians 6:1–2** – *Restore the fallen gently.*
- **James 5:16** – *Pray for healing.*

Applications

- We heal with compassion.
- We heal by forgiving.
- We heal by reconciling.
- We heal by praying.

- We heal by restoring broken people.

The brutal fact: *Christians who gossip, criticize, and condemn cannot heal anything.*

THE WARNING — “IF THE SALT LOSES ITS FLAVOUR...”

This is where Jesus becomes brutally factual.

Salt in Palestine often mixed with sand or impurities. Once its essence diluted, it became useless.

Jesus warns of two dangers:

1. LOSS OF INFLUENCE

A Christian can remain religious but lose impact.

2. LOSS OF PURPOSE

Salt that has lost its saltiness is good for nothing but to be thrown out.

This is not about losing salvation—it is about **losing usefulness to God.**

Signs a Christian has lost saltiness:

- Compromised values
- Silence in the face of truth
- Hypocrisy
- Lukewarmness
- No difference between believer and unbeliever
- No hunger for holiness
- No impact on others

Supporting Scriptures

- **Revelation 3:15-16** – *The lukewarm will be spat out.*
- **Matthew 24:12** – *Love of many will grow cold.*
- **Hebrews 12:14** – *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*

The brutal fact: *Useless salt is thrown out—not because God rejects people, but because uselessness cannot serve kingdom purpose.*

HOW TO REMAIN SALTY IN A CORRUPT GENERATION

1. Stay Connected to Christ (John 15:5)

We lose saltiness when we lose intimacy with God.

2. Practice Daily Holiness (Romans 12:1-2)

A transformed mind produces transformed influence.

3. Engage the World, Don't Escape It (John 17:15-18)

Salt must go into the food—not stay in the container.

4. Maintain Godly Convictions (Daniel 1:8)

Influence requires moral courage.

5. Be Filled with the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)

No one becomes salt by human strength — it is Spirit-enabled character.

6. Serve Actively in the Kingdom (Ephesians 4:16)

Let's use our gifts. Influence comes through service.

7. Guard Your Associations (1 Corinthians 15:33)

Wrong company drains spiritual potency.

CONCLUSION

Jesus is calling us to a life of **impact, preservation, purity, and purpose.**

We are the salt of the earth. We are needed. We are valuable. We are essential to God's mission in the world.

Our family needs our salt. Our workplace needs our salt. Our community needs our salt. The church needs our salt. The broken world needs our healing touch.

But the brutal fact from the Sermon on the Mount remains: **Salt must function as salt—or it becomes useless.**

As we live our lives this week, let's ask ourselves:

- Where are we preserving?
- Where are we seasoning?
- Where are we purifying?

- Who is thirsty for God because of us?
- Where are we healing brokenness?
- Are we still salty—or have we become bland?

May we rise from worship today as **influential, impactful, courageous, and Christlike salt-bearers**, shaping the earth for God's glory in Jesus' Name, amen

REFERENCE

Roper, D. (2008). *"Glorify your Father . . . in heaven" (Matthew 5:13–16)*. Truth for Today