

Be the Light, Be the Salt
Matthew 5:13-20

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May the words of my mouth and the ears of our hearts be open to the word of God this day. AMEN.

Today is Super Bowl Sunday, the Sunday that millions of people spend billions on snack foods and junk foods to watch a football game and some watch just to see the commercials. Now imagine that you are at a party. Someone you know is throwing a get together for the Super bowl, and there are 20 of your best friends gathered together in the family room. The game is about to start and the host is setting out a whole buffet of foods, potato chips, pretzels, dips, nachos, hot dogs and all kinds of foods. These are foods we normally don't eat much of but hey it's the super bowl and so why not indulge a little, so like everyone else you reach for a plate and head down the buffet line of junk food. You grab some of those greasy potato chips, some pretzels, a hot dog with all the works and plenty of ketchup, you can't pass up a couple of those really crunchy pickles spears and oh yeah just handful of those roasted cashews, and just a little bit of the corn chips with the delicious ranch dressing dip. So having a plate overloaded with all the good tasting junk food you sit down to watch the game. Your host is beaming with joy, because everyone looks like they are taking plenty of food and she offers to get you some cold drinks to wash it all down, and so she heads off to the kitchen.

While she is gone, everyone starts eating, including yourself, you pick up the hot dog and bit into it. And it just doesn't taste right, the ketchup is off, the meat seems bad, spongy like rubber, and the sauerkraut is just awful. You try some chips and dip and it is bland, like it cardboard. Everyone else is having the same problem you can see it in their faces, the food is awful and everyone is putting their plates down and trying to be polite spitting out the junk foods into their napkins. The host comes back in carrying a tray full of sodas, that everyone is glad to get to wash away the awful taste, the sodas are bad also. One person looking at everyone else for support is brave enough to say to the host that there is something wrong. The foods just not right. "Oh," the host replies, "that's because I used all the foods and colas and snacks that don't have any salt in them – it's healthier!" No salt Chips, no salt nuts, no salt pretzels, no salt hot dogs, sauerkraut, ketchup, pickles no salt whatsoever. Imagine the taste of all those foods without the salt – actually I am not even sure how you can make some of those foods without using Salt. The taste would be awful.

But that's okay because you still have the game to watch. So the excitement builds, its about to start, the teams all lined up, the kicker is running up on the ball and his foot is about to connect and right then all the electric goes out. No lights, no TV, no more game.

How long do you think this party would last? The Food is awful and you can't see anything including even the other friends in the room. That is exactly what it would be like with out light and with out salt. Awful isn't it.

Both light and salt are important parts of our lives. Now my story showed how important they are in planning for a super bowl party, that was just to get you thinking. But I could have used even these canned goods up here to talk about the importance of salt and light, without both of these none of these foods or vegetables would be able to be produced and stored and shipped in these cans. We could talk about so many things when it comes to the importance of salt and light. But really when it comes down to it, today I want to share with you three reasons for the importance of both salt and light in our lives. 1) They are essential for life. 2) They can purify. 3) And they can both reveal hidden truth.

Again **number one is that both salt and light are essential for life.** Nothing can grow without light. Turn off the sun and the world and all life on it would quickly die. Light is an ingredient necessary for good health, good crops, good air, for all of life.

Salt also is essential to our human body. Yes we are to limit how much sodium intact we receive, but our bodies need salt to live. If we sweat and get dehydrated, our sodium levels go dangerously low and our chemical make-up of our bodies will shut us down and even can kill us. Salt is also essential for life. We almost take it for granted now a days trying hard not to eat to much of it. But in Jesus' day salt preserved foods, especially meats that would have gone bad without refrigeration. In fact salt was often used as money in the Roman economy, we still say it today that someone "may be worth their salt."

When Jesus said to his followers that they are salt of the earth; that they are light of the world; he was saying that to be a follower of his we are to be essential to the life of the world. We can not be removed from it, not hidden from it, but to be a essential part of all that takes place. We can not be salt that doesn't have saltiness; we can not be a light that is hidden under a basket. As a follower of Christ we are a part of the world and show our faith in all that we do. No hiding our flavor, no hiding our faith. We are to live it.

And that takes risk. To get out of our comfort zone, to try new things, talk to new people, invite people we may have invited before, share the love of God with friends and enemies alike. We might even have to sacrifice something and give beyond our normal rate of giving, do something we don't feel comfortable doing, trying to deepen our relationship with God in prayer, worship, and study. Just as light shines forth giving life and salt preserves and gives life, we are to shine of the faith and influence others by our trust in God.

Jesus also teaches us that we are to be pure. **Both Salt and Light can produce purity.** Just picture some clothes hanging out on the line on a sunny summer day, now compare that to clothes left wet bundled in a basket in the basement. Which one is cleaner and smells better. Salt likewise can have

purifying qualities, salt with wounds helps them heal faster by keeping bacteria from growing and stopping infections. Even as a kid I hated gargling with salt water when I had a sore throat, but you knew it would work.

So salt and light can be producers of purity and we as the salt of the earth and the light of the world are to also be pure. To not lose our saltiness (as impure dead sea salt in Jesus' day could). We are to also not hid our light (we all understand a candle under a basket is worthless) Instead we are to be useful to seek to shine and be pure, to heal to show the way for others.

And lastly both Salt and Light reveal the truth. Salt is a seasoning, that is added to foods, meats and chips, popcorn, and pickles, even breads and cakes ask for pinch of salt to improve the taste. When we use the salt it increases the flavor of the food that it touches. Likewise Jesus tells us to enhance who we come in contact. In our homes, at school, at church, at work, in our neighborhood, at the store, we are to be that little dash of salt of truth and clarity. To be as Colossians (4:6) tells us to be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that all may know the truth. If our conversations are full of grace, seasoned with salt, we will draw attention ... not to ourselves, but to the ONE we follow. That's how we can be the salt of the earth in our daily lives.

Likewise light shines over darkness to reveal the truth. When you wake up at night and every thing is dark and you can see nothing. But when you flip on the switch, the light comes on and everything that was hidden is now revealed. We flip a switch not to stare at the light that comes on, but to use the light to reveal everything. It shows the truth of what is there, furniture, decorations, colors and shadows. Just like salt that helps give a better taste to foods, the light gives us a better clarity of all things. Likewise we are to be about doing this, improving the lives of those we see and showing the way of faith and truth in all that we do.

Now keep in mind this is not easy. Remember this is just one part of the entire sermon on the mount, the sermon that Jesus tells his disciples how to be people of God. He doesn't tell us to be like a light or be like salt. He doesn't say we should try to be salt or a light. Instead he says you are Salt of the Earth, you are Light of the World.

Everyone of us here is the salt and the light of God. Being God's people is essential, it is a part of life, it is live in purity and to know the truth that is revealed. We are God's people. Just like that party I talked about for the Super bowl at the beginning, who in their right mind would take all that food and try to remove all salt from it. Who in their right mind would try to watch the football game with out the light on, without the light of the TV on, without electricity. It just doesn't work, it just isn't good. We are God's people, the salt the light, now live it. Amen.

May the peace and Grace of God be with you this day and throughout the week to come. AMEN.

