

Matthew 5:13

Todd Fletcher [00:00:04] Matthew writes this, "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Thus reads the words of the Lord, you may be seated.

Todd Fletcher [00:00:38] So as we come to the statement, "you are the salt of the earth," this is not a command this is a statement of fact. As a Christian, you are the salt of the earth. It's important that we recognize also that we are the light of the world. These are things that as Christians who are born again, they have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, we are the hope of the earth in the sense of the message we carry the very gospel of Jesus Christ. It's important that we as the Church represent that to a decaying and putrefying world. I've titled this sermon "Get Out of the Salt Shaker" because the world wants Christians to remain in the salt shaker. We are the salt but if the world can just confine us and keep us kind of within the four corners of our church buildings, then we're no threat to the world. But Jesus calls us to go into the world. He says, go into all the world, go into all the world to make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them all that I have taught you. And I will be with you to the very end of the age, is what He says as before He ascends into heaven.

Todd Fletcher [00:01:41] So we're commanded to go, not to remain. We're commanded to let our light shine before others. Not to hide our light so that we don't receive persecution. So as we see today, verse 13 is all about the fact that we are the salt of the world, but we can lose our saltiness. This is a real threat, this is a real issue for Christians today is, what does a Christian look like who's no longer salty? So salt must come out of the shaker to be useful and also salt must be used. We were just, I was just with a group of friends last week and we were at a restaurant where the the chef had no passion and no love for salt. All the food that he cooked seemed to have absolutely no flavor. It was good food in the sense of it was good chicken and it was good potatoes, but if you don't add salt, it lacks kind of that good taste. There's no zest in the food. And in fact, that's what a Christian is like in the sense of you could be born again, you could be saved, but there's no zest to your life. You're not impacting, you're not on mission, you're off mission. There was an old salt company, I think it still exists today, my wife is the one who buys all the salt, so I don't know really if this company still exists, probably does. Morton Salt, is it still exists? Perfect. They have a tagline that says this "When it rains, it pours" because the issue with salt is when it gets humid, what does salt do? It clumps up. It doesn't come out of the shaker.

Todd Fletcher [00:03:01] So they're saying even if it's raining, it's going to come out, which we know is not true. That's false advertisement. Even with Morton Salt, it does not come out of the shaker when it's humid. It's interesting because humidity has a massive effect upon salt, just like sin has a massive effect upon our saltiness. The more impurities that we have in our lives, the less salty we will be. Hebrews 12:1 says, as we look to Christ, who is the founder and perfecter of our faith. Hebrews 12:1 says this, "let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely." Those things that hinder our walk with Christ and those sins that help us, or that force us to lose our saltiness are things that we need to do battle with every single day. See, when we look at this statement, "you are the salt of the earth." Again, that is a statement of fact. As a born again Christian, you are

the preservative. You are the purifying agent that God has left here to help a putrefying world. And we're going to get into that. So we're going to look at three things today. We're going to do a little recap because this is connected to the Beatitudes. And this is important because we recognize how we become salty through the Beatitudes. So the point number one is, how to become salty, becoming salt, that's the first point. The second point is this being salty, if you are salt, how do you continue to be salt and light in a lost and dying world? And the third point is, do we, can we lose our saltiness? What does a Christian like who has lost their saltiness? Does that mean you can lose your salvation? Some people have argued through the statement that if salt loses its saltiness, perhaps it's possible to lose our salvation.

Todd Fletcher [00:04:46] And I'm just going to tell you at the very beginning, you cannot lose your salvation if you've been born again, but you can lose your effectiveness even if you've been born again as far as your gospel witness is concerned and your kingdom effectiveness. So what we're going to see today is this that Jesus has purified his people through His blood and we are the salt of the earth in a putrefied world. And that we're putrefied is important. We're going to look at that in a couple of ways because this world is decaying, this world is putrefying. It's interesting. There's even even different ways to spell putred, because I wanted to make sure I was spelling it correctly. And as I was doing research into the process of decay, that the process of putrefication, it really is a unsettling subject when you look into a decaying body, a decaying world. So as we move on to this first point, we're going to look again, and we're going to look specifically at this world, a putrefied world. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, again, as I've been studying him, he's very helpful in the Sermon on the Mount. He really goes slowly, he explores every area of this sermon, and he says "one of the things that's unique to his time, his day, the 19th in the 20th century, is that philosophers and great thinkers of their day thought the humans, through science and progress, could usher in utopia. There's actually a belief among evolutionists that humanity, that humankind had reached a new level, a new and essentially a new plane of existence to where, through science and through progress, we could conquer sin, we could conquer theft, we could conquer death, we could conquer decay. We could conquer war."

Todd Fletcher [00:06:28] They thought that science was the key to all things. Now, was that true? Put yourself in the early 20th century, that's the 1900s. Put yourself at the turn of the century in 1900, and you're hearing about utopianism, what was about to happen in the early 20th century? World War I and World War II. Now World War I and World War II changed everything, even for theologians. We're in an interesting time right now, aren't we, where the one of the most popular statements or questions, is World War III about to happen? Again, we don't know the answers that only God knows what's about to happen. But the reality is, is God is removing His common grace, His sustaining and His protecting, and His purifying grace from culture. This is Romans 1 that He is handing us over to the depravity of our own minds, that our hearts are actively being darkened by God as a judgment against this world. We see in first and second Thessalonians that He sends a diluting spirit to send us into further delusion as a judgment. So is this world really decaying? That's an important question to answer. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says this of his day before, as he reflected on World War I and World War II. He says this, "Jesus' statement, You are the salt of the earth. He asks the question, what does that imply? It clearly implies rottenness in this earth. It implies a tendency to pollution and to becoming foul and offensive. That is what the Bible has to say about this world. This world is rotten. It has fallen, sinful, and bad. Its tendency is to evil and to wars. It is like meat, which has a tendency to putrify to become polluted. It is like something which can only be kept wholesome by means of a preservative or antiseptic. You see, if this world is left to itself, it

will, by its nature, what? Rot. It will decay. As a result of sin and the fall life in the world generally tends to get putrid, more and more putrid. That, according to the Bible, is the only sane and right view to take of humanity. Far from there being a tendency in life in the world to go upwards, that's what the secularist thinks, that through evolution and through science, scientific achievement and advancement, that we will go upwards as a race. It is the exact opposite. The world left to itself is something that tends to fester. There are these germs of evil, these microbes, these infective agents and organisms in the very body of humanity. And unless checked, they cause disease."

Todd Fletcher [00:09:08] Now, let me ask you church, is that true? That our world tends to fester. It tends to go from bad to worse. You see right now, we are in a situation, even in America, where churches all across the land are closing their doors almost every single week. My father in law has a unique calling, in fact, he's gone to multiple churches in the past 5 to 10 years, and he's closed down three churches. And he's in a mainline denomination and mainline denominations are closing. But we see all around the United States, churches are dying. Now, churches like these, God is blessing faithful churches that are theologically strong. But those churches that are not as theologically strong, those churches in the mainline denominations are closing incredibly fast. And there's two ways we could look at this, one we could be joyful, that strong churches are standing and maybe bad churches are dying. But also there's a sadness that hits me because Christianity is dying in America. And now the remnant, the faithful, the salt will stand out. But as a culture, God is removing His light from our culture. So what do we do as the light is being removed from our culture? Do we just essentially cry and lock our doors and get our protective weapons? I didn't want to get too political there on what types of protective weapons we might have. Or do we get on the offensive with the gospel and with the with the light of of God's word, right.

Todd Fletcher [00:10:40] So as Martyn Lloyd-Jones is looking at his world is is evaluating his world in light of World War I and World War II, he says things are only going from bad to worse. Now let's do a recap of how to become salty. So this is the Beatitudes, and I'm not going to spend much time if you want to spend more time in the Beatitudes, I spent a couple of months preaching through each one of these. But I just want to do a flyover real quick because we need to recognize this is who salt is, this is the very characteristic of a salty person. And I say that in the best way, this is what we are as Christians. So Christian character number one, we're humble people. We're people that recognize we have nothing to offer God, that we, in our own selves, in our own flesh are putrid. That we are essentially offensive. We're odorous to God in our natural state. And we need to mourn that fact, that's number two, we need to mourn that fact and repent over our putrefaction, over the fact that we have offended a holy God. And then once we mourn and we repent over those things, then we become meek, we submit to His Lordship we're under His divine control, all of the things that we have are at God's disposal for His use. Number four, then we begin to hunger and thirst for righteousness, for holiness. Our desires change, we no longer desire sin. We no longer desire destruction and decay, we desire God's holiness. We desire righteousness.

Todd Fletcher [00:12:00] Number five, we become merciful, we are forgiving rather than being vengeful. Rather than getting people back, we begin to forgive. Number six, we're pure in heart, we're single minded. We're set on God's path, we're on the narrow way. Our focus is to follow God in every single way. Number seven, we are peacemakers, we're others centered. We're focused on blessing other people rather than ourselves. When we see conflict among us, we enter into that conflict to bring peace, that's what Jesus did. He entered into the conflict and He brought peace. And number eight, this is why I went

through this, this connects with being salty, being the salt of the earth. Number eight, we are blessed when we are persecuted. So as John MacArthur said in his study, he said the first seven beatitudes will always lead to the eighth. The person who is characterized by the first seven beatitudes will be persecuted for righteousness sake. Why? Because salt stands out, salt is different. And when you stand out and you're God centered, you're focused on glorifying God. You are salt, you're different, people will notice you. And that's exactly what God has determined for His church is for us to be in the world, but what? Not of the world. We're called to be in the world not to be isolationists. We're not called to just run to the hills and protect what we have and just be around people that are exactly like us. That's not what Christians are called to. We are called to be in the world, not of the world.

Todd Fletcher [00:13:35] We're called to be salt for called to be a preserving and purifying agent in this world, the church has to be active. This is why, you know in my dreams, sometimes I dream about just going and buying land in the middle of nowhere and never seeing another human again and just living, you know, just have that picture of my children loving me and my wife loving me and, you know, having horses and all those types of things. But then I realize I'm not called to that, some people can do that. Some people may be called to that, but most of us are called to be in the world, to be around nonbelievers, to be around people that hate us, right. We're called to go into the battle, not run from the battle. It's important. Now, the Christians in the past have ran from the battle. This is one of my favorite studies, there was a time in my life where I was just enraptured, I was so intrigued by monks. I just thought monks were the coolest people in the world. That shows you how nerdy I am when I think monks are cool. But there's a certain type of monk that I want to bring your attention. It's called a stylight monk. What is a stylight monk? Well, these are monks that lived on columns that were 20 meters above the ground, and they had boxes, think of a Roman pillar with a box on top that was designed for a monk to live in. Now, how long would a monk live in one of these pillars, or on top of one of these pillars? Well, Simon the stylight lived on top of a pillar for 37 years.

Todd Fletcher [00:14:59] Now, how did he eat? People put that food up to him. How did he go to the bathroom? He sent buckets down to them. See, this is a crazy style, but he was famous. People would travel all over the world to see Simon the stylight monk. Is that the pinnacle of Christian existence? Is to live on top of a pillar and to be so isolated and separated from the world that you are essentially so other or heavenly minded that you're truly no earthly good, that you don't want to be infected by fallen people and by sinners? See this is not what Jesus is calling us to. This is religion at its worst is when we are so isolated and so separated that we do not love and we do not share the gospel with others, especially those who are our enemies. That's what Jesus says pray for your enemies, love those who persecute you. Rejoice when you're persecuted, right. So we need to be in the world, not of the world. Let's look at what the worldly mindset looks like. Turn to First John chapter 2. John is dealing with a very worldly church, and it's interesting because they're worldly in a different way than like the Corinthian church. The Corinthian church had a lot of issues with regard to sexual immorality. The church that John is dealing with, in Ephesus in the letter of First John, is dealing with a compromised church when it comes to philosophy. They've embraced what's called platonism. Plato, the great philosopher, essentially theorized that all the spiritual world was good and the material world was bad. And so these Christians had adopted platonism and they combined it with Christianity, and then they created what was called Gnosticism. And that's what John is dealing with, is a compromised philosophy in First John.

Todd Fletcher [00:16:45] But also Gnosticism had a worldly mindset that was foundational to the way people live. So look at First John chapter 2, verse 15. John says this, "Do not love the world or the things in the world." So what we're going to see here is to be a Christian is to not love the world. To be a Christian is to despise the decay and the sin that is in this world. We don't despise sinners, we seek to save sinners with the gospel of Jesus Christ. But we despise sin. We despise the decay that Satan has brought in through the rebellion. So he says, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Here, so here's a black and white John. If you love this world, if there is nothing in you that desires righteousness and desires to glorify God, then there's not much assurance in that existence. Now we're going to see there are some Christians who do love God, but they struggle with sin. And in fact, there are times where we become so off focus that we go we go so far off the path that we're living just like the world. But eventually we come back, right? The prodigal son. So there are times when all of us go through dark nights of the soul and we struggle to follow God as we should. But ultimately, and John is dealing in black and white, if you love the world, that means the love of the Father is not in you. You see how polar opposite these two things are. Then he says, verse 16 is going to clarify what he means by this, "for all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

Todd Fletcher [00:18:28] Now, if you know your Bibles, First John 2:16 reminds you of what passage in the Old Testament? Genesis 3, remember how Eve was tempted? It looked good to her eyes. It seemed like it would be a delight to her stomach, her passion. She desired it. And then also she desired to be like God, the pride of life. So here you see the desires of the flesh. These are kind of fleshly passions, the desires of the eyes, envy, the things that we want that we're not allowed to have. And then pride of life to be like God, to not follow God. He says this is not from the Father, but it's from the world. Verse 17, though says, "And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." So here, John, the black and white apostle, is explaining that if you love the world, that means the love of the Father cannot be in you, these two are polar, they're diametrically opposed. So we must be in the world, not of the world. Now let's turn to John 17, Jesus prays this for His disciples in the upper room. And in John 17, He makes it very clear that we have a mission. He's not going to take us out of the world, but we have a mission to be different than the world. So John, 17 is called the high priestly Prayer, we're going to pick it up in verse 14 and Jesus says this, he's talking to the Father in a prayer. He says, "I have given them," His disciples "your word, and the world has hated them because they are," what? "Not of the world." They're different. "Just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one."

Todd Fletcher [00:20:06] So he's saying I'm not of the world and neither are My disciples. Now, weren't all the disciples born in Adam? Yeah, they were. They were of the world. What happened to them? They were born again. Their old man was crucified with Christ, as Romans 5 says, and they were risen to a new life in Christ Jesus. They're new creatures. They have a spiritual birth. They're born from above now, in the sense of they're like Christ, they are now children of God. They've been born again. So he says, "I do not ask that you take them out of the world." Now, if Jesus desired to save us from sin and from corruption and from suffering, what would He do the second you became saved? He would remove you. Right, it be like the second that you receive Jesus you'd be raptured and it'd be people just be taken up every time they receive Jesus. Is that the plan? No. Why does He leave us here? Could He take us the second we're saved? Yes, He could. Why does He keep us here? Because we have a mission, it's the great Commission. We

are called to go into all the world and make disciples. God has a heart for the lost, and so should we. So He says, "I do not ask that you take them out of world, but that you keep them from the evil one." Who's that? Satan. So he doesn't want us to be taken by Satan. He's praying for our protection. Verse 16, "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."

Todd Fletcher [00:21:31] Verse 17, "sanctify them." That is, purify them in the truth. "Your word is truth." How do we grow in our sanctification? Through His word? Verse 18, "as you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." See, as a disciple of Jesus we're called to be in the world. He's sending us. Our commander in chief is sending us into darkness. "And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in the truth." Meaning that when we're in the dark, when we're agents of light in the dark, that we have to put on the full armor of God right? Ephesians 6. And the only offensive weapon that God has given us is the Word of God. And we need to be sanctified in the Word of God. And we need to go battle, go to battle with the word of God. So as a Christian, we're to be salt and light. We must be born again. That's how you become salt, is you must be born again. Well, how can you be born again? You believe on the Lord Jesus. You repent of your sins. You trust in Him and Him alone. He's the only way. He's the only truth. He's the only life. No one comes to the Father but through Jesus Christ. So you believe in the gospel that's how you're born again. You have a new heart. So as Christians, we are salt. So again, we're not commanded to be salt, we are salt. We have to recognize that if you're truly His, you already are salt. The question is, as are you salty? Now, sometimes when you say someone's salty, you know it's not a good thing. They're just salty. But what we're talking about here is a good thing.

Todd Fletcher [00:23:08] You want to be salty, you want to be pleasing to God. So let's look more specifically, let's look closely at verse 13. So Matthew 5, verse 13, "you are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet." So again, notice you are the salt of the earth. You have influence. God has given you influence in this world. You have a purpose, if you are here. And this is the thing about Christians, all of us are walking testimonies. The question is, is our testimony good or bad? Right. We know a lot of Christians that have bad testimonies. In fact, they are said to be hypocrites. They say one thing on Sunday morning and they live a totally different way through the rest of the week. But there are also good Christians. There are Christians who, when you encounter, you feel like you've been lifted up somehow your thoughts have been lifted up. The way you're thinking, the way you're talking has changed because you're around those who are truly the salt of the earth. Now the question is for all of us is how salty are we? We're all salt if we're born again, all of us are salt. The question is, is how salty are you? D L Moody was very, very salty. Listen to Woodrow Wilson's explanation of his encounter with D L Moody. Woodrow Wilson told the story of being in a barber shop one time and I've heard this story many times, and I think it's worth repeating. I was sitting, this is Woodrow Wilson, "I was sitting in a barber chair when I became aware that a powerful personality had entered the room."

Todd Fletcher [00:24:49] Have you ever experienced this? When someone enters the room and you just realize someone came in here? Whether good or bad, we can feel that sometimes. "A man had come quietly in upon the same errand as myself to have his hair cut and sat in the chair next to me. Every word the man uttered, though it was not in the least didacted." So he didn't come in preaching, "showed a personal interest in the man who was serving him. He was asking the barber how his day was going, how his family was. And before I got through with what was being done to me," that's sometimes how I

feel my haircuts are, what's being done to me, anyways. "I was aware," in fact, I cut my own hair, just so you know Glory has nothing to do with my hair. So anyway, "I was aware I had attended an evangelistic service." He says, "by just sitting in the barber chair. It's as if I went to church because Mr. D.L. Moody, the great evangelist, was in that chair. I purposely lingered in the room after he had left and noted the singular effect that his visit had brought upon the barbershop. They talked in undertones. They did not know his name, but they knew something had elevated their thoughts. And I felt that I left that place as I should have left a place of worship." You see, D L Moody was such a holy and godly man that his very presence affected Woodrow Wilson. Is that the type of effect that you have on your friends and on your family members? That's a good question, isn't it? What type of effect, and it's interesting, I've always struggled in my life spelling affect versus effect. Affect has this idea of affection.

Todd Fletcher [00:26:35] Effect has this with an E, has the idea of you've been effected. Affection and being effected. It's interesting how people can affect us with our affections, but also they have this kind of transforming effect on us as well. What type of effect do you have on people's affections? Interesting. Being salty is important. Now I said this and it's worth repeating. Verses 13 through 16 I think are the title, they're essentially a restatement of everything else that comes in the Sermon on the Mount. One of the main questions that I seek to answer today is this How shall its saltiness be restored? As a Christian, if you've lost your saltiness, how shall that saltiness be restored? Isn't that a good question? And Jesus gives us an entire sermon to show us how that saltiness can be restored. We'll get to that in a second. But we see this statement. You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world. Those are facts. That's reality as a born again believer, you are those things. And he says in verse 16, one of the most important verses in this sermon is this, "in the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to" you? No, "give glory to" God "your Father who is in heaven." You are commanded to let your light shine, to let people see your good works. Now, what will that do in your life if you let your light shine? If you let people see your good works, will you be championed by the world? Will they love you and promote you? No. Look if back to verse 11, "blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely in my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who are before you."

Todd Fletcher [00:28:33] See when you let your light shine. When you are salty, when you let people know that you are a Christian, you will be hated. People will seek to cast you out. The world does not like salt, they spew it out of their mouth. But you know what God likes? God likes salt. He will never spit you out of His mouth when you're salty. That's what we want, right? So you see being salty, there are 11 characteristics of salt. It's fascinating. If you want some enjoyable reading, read all the commentaries on what salt is here, because there are so many different opinions on what salt is. So I'm going to take the commentator that presented all of them and give them all to you. The 11 characteristics of salt, which might be in Jesus's mind as He's teaching this. And this is really just a systematic study of salt throughout the scriptures. What is salt? So number one, this is interesting, Leviticus 2:13. Let's turn there for a second. Leviticus 2:13 is an important verse and it's mentioned by all the commentators because this establishes the value of salt to God. Leviticus 2:13, this is God speaking, He says, "you shall season all your grain offerings with salt. You shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be missing from your grain offering; with all your offerings, you shall offer salt." So does God like salt? Yes, He does. In fact, in Numbers 18:19, we don't have time to read this one, he signs a covenant. He cuts a covenant of salt with His people. So what we see from this is salt is pleasing to God.

Todd Fletcher [00:30:18] God likes salt. But also we see this turn to Second Kings 2 verses 19 through 23. So the first two aspects here as salt as added sacrifices. And second, there is a covenant of salt. So now we're going to look at salt purifying water. This is a really interesting passage, turn to the Second Kings chapter 2. And in Second Kings chapter 2 we come to a story of salt purifying water. So Second Kings 2 verses 19 through 23. Now the men of the city said to Elisha, "that's the prophet, "behold, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees, but the water is bad, and the land is unfruitful." Water is important, isn't it? Water affects the crops, water affects the people. Water is very important. "He said, bring me a new bowl and put salt in it. So they brought it to him. Then he went to the spring of water and threw salt in and said, Thus says the Lord, I have healed this water; from now on neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it. So the water has been healed to this day, according to the word that Elijah spoke." How was the water healed? It was healed with what? Salt. So salt is purifying, salt heals bad water in Scripture. Job 6:6, we don't have time to read this one, says that salt gives taste to food. Salt adds zest to life. My son loves salt, and his favorite French fries are wherever there is the most salt. It's interesting because that's something he always comments on is the level of salt in those French fries. And so now he just asks for salt wherever he goes because he loves the taste of salt. Salt adds zest to life. So that's number four.

Todd Fletcher [00:32:12] Number five is this, salt is a preservative. It preserves. Now, this is perhaps the most important use of salt in the ancient world. They did not have refrigerators back in ancient times. In fact, refrigerators are a fairly new invention. So if you didn't have refrigerators, how did you preserve your food? There's salt. You rubbed salt into everything, which means you needed what, a lot of salt. You needed a lot of salt back in the ancient time because that's how you preserve what God had given you. So that's probably the main characteristic that God is bringing into this, is that salt preserves, salt preserves from decay. Number six, salt is a necessity. The Romans said this, there are two things that are not necessary in life. This was Pliny the Elder, he said salt and sunshine, can I get an Amen? Salt and sunshine, I love both of those things. Sunshine is incredibly important. It's incredibly important, that's where we get much of our vitamins and that's where we get our energy is from the sun. But salt is important, too. If you only drink water without minerals, you'll die. Salt is incredibly essential. That's the key is salt is essential. Salt in this world is essential to God's plan. We are essential to God's plan as the salt of the earth. Number seven, salt is seen as a sign of loyalty. Ezra 4:14, it's a sign of loyalty to God that if you are eating salt in the sense of in worship of Yahweh, that you are loyal to Yahweh, you're loyal to God. Salt is a sign of loyalty. As Christians, we must be loyal to God. Number eight salt is linked with peace. We see this in Mark chapter 9, verse 50, that salty people are peacemakers.

Todd Fletcher [00:33:55] We see that in the Beatitudes that those who are the salt of the earth, they are prone to peace. They diffuse peace wherever they go. They're peacemakers. Number nine, this is important, let's turn to Colossians 4 verse 5. This is one I think needs to be revisited in the church today. I've heard many Christians that no longer are concerned with cussing. Is cussing a sin? Yes, it is. It's very clear in the scriptures that cussing is a sin because we are to be the salt of the earth. Our words are to be seasoned with salt. It says let no detestable or rotten or putrid thing come from our mouths. As Christians, we speak truth, we speak life. Colossians 4, verse five says this, "walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of our time." Verse 6, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt." We want to be those people that when we speak, it's uplifting. It's encouraging. It's light. It's not darkness. "So that you may know how you are to answer each person." See our words are so important to God. We will be

judged for every careless word that falls off of our tongue. We need to be so careful because our tongues are like little fires that can light an entire forest ablaze. So our speech needs to be flavored with with salt. And this is what I call a holy talk. We need to be those that speak in holy ways. Number ten, salt is connected or linked with wisdom by the rabbis of Jesus's time. This is well known in rabbinic tradition they saw that salt and wisdom were one and the same in the sense that if you were a wise person, you were a person that spoke with salt.

Todd Fletcher [00:35:40] And then finally, salt was loved by the gods. The Greeks loved salt. And so we see from this that salt is, generally speaking, acceptable to God. God in His divine nature loves what salt brings to this world. So as we think through this being salty, these 11 characteristics, I'm just going to point out two, one salt stands out. Salt doesn't hide salt. You can't hide salt in food, can you? If there's salt in there, you're going to know there's salt in there. You can't hide salt. Salt is intended to stand out. Jesus intends for Christians to stand out. Not to hide. Get out of the salt shaker, right. We're called to stand out and we're called to be in this world. Number two, we are called to preserve what is good. What's happening right now in our nation is God is removing His restraining grace. There's a famine in the land and the famine is the word of God. God is removing His word from our country as people are rejecting Him. That's why churches are closing all around our country right now, because it's a judgment from God. And so as the church, we are called to be the salt, the preserving salt in our culture, get back out there, don't give up the fight. It can be discouraging talking to pastors. It can be discouraging talking to pastors about how many churches they've seen closed and they themselves have closed over the past five years. But you need to recognize is that we have the victory, that Jesus is the King. He is coming back. We're not operating from defeat, we're operating from victory. The goal is to save those who are lost and dying, to go into the world with boldness, with the gospel on our shoes, with our our feet shown with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Todd Fletcher [00:37:33] So we are called to be an aroma of Christ to a lost and dying world. Let's turn to Second Corinthians chapter 2. In Second Corinthians chapter 2, there's this amazing verse that talks about the fact that we are an aroma of Jesus Christ. That when people are around us, they smell Christ on us. They smell something different about us. So Second Corinthians chapter 2, starting in verse 14. This is Paul writing to the Corinthian church, this is his second letter after he's dealt with some pretty serious issues. He says this in verse 14, "But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere." Isn't that a beautiful phrase? We spread the fragrance of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. That's what we do as Christians. We're diffusers of Christ. Verse 15, "for we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death." Those are those people that hate Jesus, they hate salt. "To the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?" Verse 17, "for we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ." See, we're not here to peddle God's Word, we're here to speak Christ, to speak the Word of Jesus Christ. So let's turn to our third point, losing saltiness. Turn back to Matthew 5, verse 13. So we know how to become salt. We know what it looks like to be salt. Now, what about losing our saltiness?

Todd Fletcher [00:39:21] So the third point here, notice and verse 13, "you are the salt of the earth," doesn't say you are the salt of Israel, doesn't say you're the salt of Canaan, says you're the salt of the earth. This is significant. This has major ramifications because

this is not just for Israel, this is for the church. He's saying that you are the salt of the earth. Matthew Henry explains that "God does not conquer the world through the sword, as far as in the church age." He will when Jesus returns. Jesus will have a sword coming out of his mouth. He'll speak judgment on the nations. But right now, in the church age, what we're called to do is conquer the world through what? The gospel. That's what we're called to do. We have a weapon, and that weapon is the word of God. We take every dark stronghold down, every stronghold of Satan down with the truth. It's amazing. Matthew Henry says this, "he says nothing, or they ask the question, What could they do in so large a province as the whole of the earth, these church people? Nothing if they were to work by force of arms or dent of sword, but being to work silent as salt, one handful of that salt would diffuse its savor far and wide would go a great way, a work insensible and irresistible as leaven, like the church's leaven is salt, is undeniable, it's irresistible. The doctrine of the gospel is as salt it is penetrating quick and powerful. It reaches the heart, it is cleansing. It is relishing and preserves from putrefaction." There's that word again. "We read of the savor of the knowledge of Christ for all other learning is insipid, it's tasteless without that." Life is insipid without Christ, it's tasteless without Christ. What is success without Jesus? Think about that.

Todd Fletcher [00:41:11] You can gain the whole world and you forfeit your soul. When you're talking to someone on their deathbed, what are they talking about? They wish they could have earned one more dollar, is that what they say? No, they think about what impact did I have in this world? What legacy am I leaving behind and where am I going? That's an important question on your deathbed is where are you going? What's next? You see, what matters is the gospel. What matters is Jesus Christ. That's all that matters. Right now, we're talking a lot about Islam in the world. You know that Islam brings peace through the sword. How do Christians bring peace into this world? Through the gospel. You know, a radical Muslim kills infidels, a radical Christian is willing to be killed to save infidels. Is that interesting? Are we willing to lay our life down for our enemies? That's what a salty person looks like. But how can we lose our salt? So it's interesting. Did you know salt can't lose its saltiness? That sodium chloride is a stable compound and it cannot lose its saltiness. So is Jesus just not a very good scientist? Well, I would like to remind you Jesus created salt, sodium chloride. So He knows exactly that it's a stable compound. He has no questions about that. What does He mean? It's it's fascinating as you study this, did you know Christian can't lose their salvation? Just like salt can't lose its saltiness? But a Christian can lose their kingdom effectiveness. Just like salt can be leached out of other minerals. The more impurities there are in salt, the less salty it is. The more sin that there is in our lives, the less effective we are.

[00:42:56] Isn't Jesus brilliant? Yeah you can't lose your saltiness if you're born again. You can't lose your salvation. Salt can't lose its saltiness, but you can lose your effectiveness. That's what we're dealing with here. So salt, sodium chloride can't lose its salt. But in Jesus's day, there really was no such thing as pure salt. Let me explain to you the types of salt that Jesus might have been thinking of here. Number one is this, Jesus may be alluding to rock formations that contain deposits of sodium chloride. Meat and fish were packed into these rocks to preserve them. And after a period of time, salt would leach out of these rocks so that rocks were no longer good for anything but to be thrown out. That's possible. Rocks that had sodium chloride in them but over time, the salt would leach out so they were no longer good for preserving food. Number two, this is interesting, Jesus may be referring to salt collected from the Dead Sea. If you've ever been to the Dead Sea, it's incredibly salty. And they would evaporate the salt out of the Dead Sea. This would include crystals and other minerals, such as gypsum formed by precipitation of calcium sulfate from seawater. And what would happen is that as those things were mixed, as gypsum

and sodium chloride were put together, that was actually not a very effective salt. It was a weaker type of salt that had less strength to preserve less taste. And then the third is Jesus may be alluding to salt blocks used by air bakers to line the floor of their ovens. After some time, intense heat eventually caused the blocks to crystallize and undergo a change in chemical composition and then they would be thrown out as unserviceable. And what they would do with all these salt blocks that were no longer were worth anything as they would put them on trails and on rooftops, as tread as something that you could walk upon in order to have traction.

Todd Fletcher [00:44:41] So it's fascinating that Jesus says that that's what you do with bad salt, as you put it, in places where there's traction that's needed, you trample on it under people's feet. So Jesus knows what He's talking about. And we see what He's saying here is that salt, when it's mixed with impurities, becomes useless. A Christian, when they're overcome by their sin and they love their sin, they lose their kingdom effectiveness. You're born again, we're not talking about salvation, we're talking about effectiveness. As a Christian, how do you impact the world? When will you hear, well done, good and faithful servant, you've been faithful with little, liver. Oh, my goodness. You've been faithful with a little, now you will be faithful with much, right? Not liver, but you could be faithful with liver, maybe, perhaps. So the statement here is this, the more impurities, the less salty. The more sin, the less effective. That's why we want to deal with our sin. So can saltiness be restored, isn't that an important question? Can you be a salty Christian again? Now this word to lose your taste, to lose its taste in the Greek is really interesting. Look back to verse 13, "you are the salt of the earth but if salt has," and here's the Greek word, "lost its taste," this word in the Greek is moros, sorry, moros, I know moros that's what it is moros. And that's where we get the word moron. That's why I was trying to get that correct. Moros, moron is a foolish person. So if salt loses its taste, it becomes a moron, a foolish person. They're no longer wise. Well, what does a foolish Christian look like? There's someone who is adopting and living a foolish life.

Todd Fletcher [00:46:39] This word is used in Matthew 25. Turn there, if you will, for a second, Matthew 25. This word in the Greek for losing your saltiness, becoming foolish. Matthew, 25, look at verses 2 through 3. This is the parable of the ten virgins. And you had some virgins who were foolish. And in verse 2, "five of them were," here's the word in the Greek, "foolish." I'm not going to attempt that word again because I already made a fool of myself trying to say that word. "Five of them were foolish, and five of them were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps." So that word in the Greek is the same. Losing the taste of salt is the same Greek word here as becoming foolish or being foolish. Now look at verse 8, "and the foolish one said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." So you see this word is repeated over and over again in this parable, because these people are not ready for Christ's return. They're not ready for the Prince, they're not ready for the marriage. They are foolish. And some of us Christians, when Christ returns, when He comes back we will be ashamed at His coming because we weren't prepared. We weren't salty as we should have been. And we lose assurance in this, turn to Second Peter 1, verses 9 through 10. Second Peter 1, verses 9 through 10 deals with the assurance of the believer. Peter writes this, "for whoever lacks these qualities." And he goes through a bunch of Christian virtues above this. He said, "is so near-sighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore brothers, be all the more diligent to," what? "Confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall."

Todd Fletcher [00:48:46] So if you're living a life that is not salty, if you're living a life that's characterized by sin, you will lose assurance. So Peter says this, "be sure to confirm your calling." Confirm your election by living as Christ has called us to do. So how do we grow in our assurance of our salvation? Again, we know we're saved if we believe in Jesus Christ, but we are assured of that salvation as we see the fruit of Jesus Christ in our lives, and that's what we're called to do. So as we close here, I want to remind you a couple of things, is one, we are salt and we need to be salt in this world. The world needs us to be in it. The world needs us to be active and to not be overcome by our sins. We need to be those who are good at being poor, not those who are clumsy because of the humidity of our sin. Right? That sin isn't keeping us from being poured out, but that our holiness is encouraging our lives being poured out in this world. So if you're asking the question, how shall my saltiness be restored, I have good news for you. That's what the rest of the Sermon on the Mount is. And we're just going to do a quick fly over here. This is how your saltiness can be restored. You repent and then you do these things, rejoice in the persecutions that come from being salty. Let your light shine before the world so that they may see your good works.

Todd Fletcher [00:50:11] Fulfill the law of Jesus Christ. Take extreme measures against your sin. How extreme? Are you willing to cut off your hand? Gouge out your eye? We see Jesus says, take extreme measures against sin. Pray for God's help. Do you know the Lord's Prayer is in the series? Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Pray for God's help. Store your treasure in heaven for where your treasure is there your heart will be also. Don't be anxious about your life, about the food that you eat or the clothes you will wear, does not God take care of the lilies of the field and the sparrows of the air. Go through the narrow gate, not the broad gate. Build your house on the rock and not on the sand. See, that is how you live a salty life. As you keep the words of Jesus. He gives you everything you need to be the salt of the earth. So we know what we are as believers we are salt, but we must live like salt. That's the command here. We are salt in a putrid world. The thing that keeps this world from putrefying even further is the Church of Jesus Christ. We must be the church in this world. And finally, we must not let our kingdom effectiveness wane. We must not lose our kingdom effectiveness. We must be on mission. And the holier you are, the more effective you will be in this world. Jonathan Edwards once said that he endeavored, he resolved to be the holiest person of his generation. May we all resolve that to be holy and to be effective. So as we close here, be in the world, be not of the world, stay salty. Rejoice in your persecution.

Todd Fletcher [00:52:04] One Puritan says this, in regards to saltiness and persecution, "materially, all afflictions belong to the covenant of works. But by the cross of Christ they are transferred to the New Covenant. They are thereby made healthful as the tree that Moses cast into the waters took away their bitterness, which some think was a type of this. Afflictions are bitter, and men murmur at them as Israelites at the bitter waters. But this is huge. But the Cross of Christ makes them wholesome waters. They are like salt to the sacrifice, Leviticus 2:13. They consume man's corrupting humors." What is it that ultimately heals our bitter waters? The cross of Jesus Christ? Just like Moses cast the tree into the waters that healed the water so Jesus's cross heals our waters.

Todd Fletcher [00:53:01] Let's pray. Father God, we thank you for this passage. And I know that none of us are perfect at being salt. All of us struggle with the flesh as Paul does and Roman 7. Lord, I pray that we would be salt in life. That we would not be foolish. Lord that we would walk, as You call us to walk, that we would let our light shine before men so that they may give glory to our Father who is in heaven. Father, I thank you for this church. I pray that this church would be faithful to Your word that we would be salt in this Canyon

and in this city, that we would be a light. That city, a city on a hill. Father, I thank You for Jesus and I thank You for His saltiness that has been transferred to us, that His salt has made us into salt. Lord, that we are now Your children and His righteousness is now our righteousness. We pray this in His name. Amen.