

THE



“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

July 2024

No. 463

SALT

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. (Mat. 5:13)

Salt is something that many of us use regularly, primarily to flavor food, but it had a much larger purpose in ancient times. One might wonder if the salt mentioned in the Bible was the same thing that we think of when we think of salt today. It seems to be the exact same thing, and there is no evidence that would suggest otherwise. In biblical times, salt was a mineral that was used in many cultures as a component of

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141 County Road 474

Woodland, AL 36280

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sacrificial offerings, a seasoning, a preservative, a disinfectant, and as a unit of exchange. The largest source of salt was the Dead Sea. People in many cases would filter it out of the water.

There are several examples in the Old Testament of salt used in sacrificial offerings:

And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt. (Lev. 2:13)

And thou shalt offer them before the LORD, and the priests shall cast salt upon them, and they shall offer them up for a burnt offering unto the LORD. (Eze. 43:24)

And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail: (Ezra 6:9)

Salt is also used as a covenant.

Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt? (2 Chr. 13:5; see also Num. 18:19)

There is also an example of it being spread over a city that was defeated, presumably to curse the re-inhabitation of the city.

And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and

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The Harvester

141 County Road 474 * Woodland, AL 36280

Phone: (256) 449-9221* Email: theharvesteronline@gmail.com

Web Page: www.churches-of-christ.org

beat down the city, and sowed it with salt. (Jdg. 9:45)

There are other historical, non-biblical references to this type of thing happening. This is similar to a scorched earth philosophy that many military units believe in.

Jesus uses salt in a direct comparison to how we live our lives. This was done partially because it was symbolism that everyone, from commoners to royalty, could understand and apply appropriately to their situations. By doing this, he was able to get a point across that transcended time and cultures. This symbolic representation is found in three of the four gospels, with a few small differences.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. (Mat. 5:13)

For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another. (Mark 9:49-50)

Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. (Luke 14:34-35)

Even though each of these is a little different, they all have the same main idea. If salt loses its flavor (or saltiness), what good is it? In Luke, Jesus says that it isn't fit for land OR dunghill. Basically, it is worthless. Salt that has lost its flavor is typically salt that has been diluted by other things, possibly other minerals, creating a weakness in flavor. This might be what Jesus was trying to get everyone to see. If we are not focused on God and on making sure that we live in a way that is pleasing to him, we are most likely keeping our focus on other things. Those other things are creating weakness or sin and are diluting the strength of the "salt" in us.

The example in Mark mentions that everyone should be salted. This idea is taken a step further in the letter to the Colossians when it is said that our speech should be seasoned with salt.

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.
(Col. 4:6)

This is another way of saying that what we do should not be bland but should have substance and flavor. Our speech should be focused on God so that we can speak clearly and in a way that is not distracted by things of this world. This idea was also mentioned in Job.

Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg? (Job 6:6)

Think about it this way—if what we say is not seasoned with salt, would it be considered unsavory and therefore not something that people want the taste of? Is your speech seasoned with salt? If not, what can you do to ensure that it is in the future?

Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. (Tit. 2:8)

Make sure that you are speaking clearly and in a godly manner. It doesn't have to be perfect, but it needs to be honest, true, and sincere.

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:1-5)

The next time you are speaking to someone, think of this. Are your thoughts and words seasoned well enough?

A. D.

GIVE AN ANSWER

Many of the people you meet in the world do not have faith in Jesus or, if they do, they have limited knowledge and understanding. When they see you living a faithful Christian life, they may question you about your faith and hope. Are you prepared to answer them as to why you live as you do? Consider what the Apostle Peter wrote in 1 Peter 3:15:

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

You should not be ashamed of your belief in Jesus. Some people in the time of Jesus believed in Him, but only in secret.

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.
(John 12:42-43)

When it comes to your faith and Christian life, you should be more concerned with what God thinks about you than what people in the world think about you. Jesus said in Matthew 10:32-33,

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

You certainly don't want Jesus to deny you before the Father. Be willing and eager to share your faith.

Peter said to "*sanctify the Lord God in your hearts*". You should have the faith that you have and be living your life as you do because you worship the Lord God from your heart. Your life is different from those of the world, not be-

cause you are just trying to be different, but because you are seeking to serve your God. Your actions and belief come from your heart. People in the world should see the genuineness of your life which invites them to want to know why you have your faith.

You should dress differently than people of the world (1 Tim. 2:9). You should avoid certain worldly activities (1 Pet. 4:3-4). Your speech should be different from those of the world (Tit. 2:8). You should be going about doing good (2 The. 3:13). You put assembling with fellow Christians more important than other activities (Heb. 10:25). Why do you do these things? You should be ready to give others a defense or an answer to their questions about you. Some Christians have grown up in the church so they have “inherited” their way of life; you should know the scriptural basis for your actions so you can tell others. Some Christians are afraid to give an answer about their faith and life because they don’t feel that they know all of the scriptures and the answers to all of the questions. You don’t have to have all of the answers – very few people do. You just need to know why you believe as you do and have the hope that you have. Being prepared to give an answer should strengthen your faith.

Why do you believe in Jesus? Why do you believe in God? I believe in God, first of all, because I see the wonderful design of the creation and I don’t believe that what we see today is the result of billions of years of evolution.

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: (Rom. 1:19-20)

What are the reasons that you believe in God? I believe in Jesus because I believe that there is enough evidence that He lived on the earth; He went about performing miracles; He

was crucified; and He arose from the grave. I also believe the word of God, the Bible, that tells me about God and about Jesus. What are the reasons that you believe in Jesus? What answer would you give?

What is your hope? I believe that this earthly life is not all that there is. I believe that there is a life after this life. My hope is to receive eternal life with Jesus and God the Father. Why do I have this hope? I have this hope because Jesus arose from the dead.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. (1 Cor. 15:19-20)

I have this hope because of the promises given in the Bible. God has given me the gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23). I live my life to please God. If I am faithful until death, I believe I will receive the promises (Rev. 2:10). What is your hope? Why do you have hope? What answer would you give?

When questioned about your faith and hope, you need to answer in “*meekness and fear*”. You answer in meekness in that you are humble and not proud or haughty in the manner that you provide an answer. The ones to whom you give an answer may come back to you in harshness, ridicule or persecution. It is necessary that you have meekness and accept any unpleasant response without responding to them as they responded to you (1 Pet. 3:9). You answer in fear, not that you are fearful of those who question you, but you are respectful of them even if they have not earned your respect.

My encouragement to you is to be prepared.

Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: (1 Pet. 3:15)

ED ANDERSON
Sierra Vista, AZ

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
July 12 - 14	Van Lear Van Lear, KY	J. D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
July 12 - 14	Antioch Douglasville, GA	Allan Daniel (Woodland, AL)
July 21 - 26	Oak Grove Woodland, AL	Hunter Bulger & Jason Conner

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Which judge was betrayed to the Philistines by a woman?
2. What is the first line of Psalm 1?
3. Who did Amnon love, and then hate even more than he had loved her?
4. What did the shepherds do after they had visited the newborn Jesus?
5. What came out of the fire Paul made on Malta and attacked him?

...ANSWERS NEXT MONTH

And remember last month's questions?

1. What was the covenant between God and Noah?
NEVER TO FLOOD THE EARTH AGAIN (Gen. 9:11)
2. What guided the Israelites through the wilderness?
A PILLAR OF CLOUD AND OF FIRE (Exo. 13:21)
3. How did David defeat Goliath? HE HIT HIM WITH A
STONE FROM HIS SLING (1 Sam. 17:49-50)
4. What is more difficult than a camel going through the eye
of a needle? A RICH MAN ENTERING THE KINGDOM
OF GOD (Mat. 19:24)
5. Where was Paul when he wrote the letter to Philemon?
IN PRISON (Phm. 1:23)