

# Luke 14:34-35

## *"Salt of the Earth"*

*November 16, 2025*

### 1. Intro

- a. Well last week we looked at verses 25 through 33, and we saw Jesus lay down the terms of being one of his disciples
  - i. If you are not willing to renounce every earthly relationship for Jesus...
  - ii. If you are not willing to pick up your cross of suffering and follow after Jesus...
  - iii. If you are not willing to renounce EVERYTHING in this world...
    1. Then Jesus himself says that you CANNOT be his disciple
      - a. Now, on the surface, that sounds like a WHOLE LOT of works that I now need to do in order to earn my salvation, and truly be a follower of Jesus
    2. But we must not forget what the Scriptures say
      - a. We are saved by the grace of God alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone
        - i. We aren't saved by any of our works, lest any man try to stand before God and boastfully say, "I have EARNED my right to be here!"
      - b. The Scriptures are clear...
        - i. We are saved by faith
          1. But this faith is an ACTIVE faith... a LIVING faith
  - iv. And an ACTIVE faith in Jesus holds Jesus up against our relationships with our parents, our relationships with our spouses and children, our friendships, our dating relationships...
    1. An active faith in Jesus holds Jesus up against all of these things, and says,
      - a. "Jesus, I choose YOU above them all, for you are WORTH being hated by all"
  - v. An ACTIVE faith in Jesus holds up Jesus against all the ease and comforts and prosperity of this world...
    1. All the promises of riches and treasure and favor with man, and says,
      - a. "Jesus, I choose to pick up my cross instead, for you are WORTH suffering for in this brief and momentary life"
  - vi. An ACTIVE faith in Jesus holds Jesus up against EVERYTHING in this world, and says,
    1. "Jesus, I renounce it all. For the sake of YOUR name and YOUR glory, I am willing to lose everything in this world...
      - a. For you are INFINITELY worth it!"
- b. This is what TRUE faith looks like, according to the Scriptures
  - i. It isn't perfect by any means
    1. In fact, it is GUARANTEED that ALL OF US will fall short of these standards, just about every day
      - a. But the one who has a TRUE faith, when they falter,
        - i. They will fall to their knees in godly sorrow and repentance
        - ii. They will confess their sins with a broken and contrite heart
        - iii. And then they will stand back up, fix their eyes on Jesus, and strive to die a little more to themselves the next time around
      - b. Those are the marks of a TRUE disciple of Jesus
    2. But here in our passage for this morning, Jesus gives us one more mark of a true disciple
      - a. A true disciple... is SALTY!

### 2. Luke 14:34-35

a. <sup>34</sup>*Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?* <sup>35</sup>*It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

i. Alright, so let's spend some time talking about salt

1. Salt is THE most abundant spice on all of the planet

a. As most of you already know, our oceans are absolutely permeated with salt

i. But that's not the only place salt is found

b. There are also salt mines that can be found all over the world,

i. Where people dig deep into the earth to extract literal TONS of salt out of these deposits

1. But you don't even have to dig into the earth to find salt, do you?

c. Just a couple of hours West of here you can go to the Salt Plains State Park in Jet, Oklahoma

i. This is an area of about 11,000 acres that is covered by a layer of salt

1. What's really interesting is that archaeologists believe that this salt was left over from when the area was covered by the ocean millions of years ago

a. But we have a better answer for it, don't we?

2. I would imagine that the waters from a global flood a few thousand years ago could achieve the very same thing... don't you think

ii. Regardless, the evidence is clear... salt runs throughout the entire earth, in some form or fashion

1. And this is REALLY good news for us, since God designed our bodies to need salt in order to function properly

a. Now, salt tends to get a bad rap in our society, since most of us eat way too much of it

i. But science has proven that, WITHOUT salt...

1. We can actually become dehydrated due to our electrolytes getting out of balance

2. And if we don't get enough salt, our thyroid gland doesn't function as it should, and therefore we get tired more easily

2. So, how amazing is it that God designed our bodies to need salt in order to function in the right way,

a. And He also put an ABUNDANCE of salt, all around the world, where people could have access to it in their normal diet

i. It's almost like He knew what he was doing when he created this earth, and then created our bodies!

iii. So, with all that in mind, we would all agree with Jesus when he says, "Salt is GOOD!"

1. The reality is that salt has MANY different benefits, beyond how we would typically use it

a. We will look at three of those benefits this morning, and we'll see how we can apply each of them to our lives as we seek to remain "salty" disciples

3. The first benefit of salt is the obvious one, in that salt adds a noticeable FLAVOR to food

a. And it doesn't take a lot to make it noticeable, does it?

i. Think about all those recipes out there that call for just "a pinch" of salt

1. That's hardly anything!

a. A "pinch" is maybe an eighth of a teaspoon... MAYBE a quarter of a teaspoon

i. A pinch doesn't seem like much at all

- b. But what happens when you forget to put that pinch of salt in the recipe?
      - i. Things just don't taste as good, do they?
  - 2. Or, how many of us, maybe when we're still trying to wake up in the morning, accidentally put a little salt in our coffee instead of sugar?
    - a. You are ABSOLUTELY going to notice that, aren't you?
- ii. So salt doesn't just add flavor to a dish... it adds a noticeably DIFFERENT flavor to the dish
  - 1. And that is what we, as disciples of Jesus, are called to do
    - a. When Jesus calls us to be the salt of the earth, he is saying that we ought to be NOTICEABLY different than everyone around us
      - i. When we enter into a conversation at work, or at a family gathering, or out in our neighborhood
        - 1. We ought to bring a noticeably different flavor to the conversation
- iii. This is what Paul teaches us in Colossians chapter 4, verses 5 and 6... as he gives this exhortation,
  - 1. *<sup>5</sup>Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. <sup>6</sup>Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*
    - a. When you interact with outsiders, people outside the Christian faith,
      - i. Paul says that you are first of all to walk in wisdom
        - 1. You walk in wisdom by immersing yourself in the Word of God on a daily basis
          - a. Reading the Scriptures...
          - b. Meditating on the Scriptures...
          - c. Praying that the Holy Spirit would help you APPLY the Scriptures
            - i. Our wisdom MUST come from the Bible and from the Spirit
        - 2. So we walk in godly and biblical wisdom
  - b. And then, second, Paul says that we are to make the best use of the time
    - i. Friends, can we all agree that our time is severely limited in these busy days?
      - 1. All of us are being pulled in all sorts of different directions, all throughout the day
        - a. So this command is EVEN MORE important for us to follow in our day
    - ii. Make the most of your time, ESPECIALLY when you are with someone who is outside the faith
      - 1. Take all that godly and biblical wisdom you've been getting from the Word, and begin to weave the words of life into your conversations
  - c. But Paul gives us a very specific manner in which we are to do this...
    - i. He says in verse 6, "Let your speech ALWAYS be gracious"
      - 1. When outsiders argue with you and call the Bible a bunch of manmade fiction
        - a. Answer them GRACIOUSLY
      - 2. When they begin to laugh at you and mock you for your ignorance and gullibility
        - a. Answer them GRACIOUSLY

3. Even if they begin to persecute you for your faith
    - a. Paul's command remains the same...
      - i. Let your speech ALWAYS be gracious
2. But then Paul adds a second component to our speech...
  - a. Let your speech ALWAYS be seasoned with salt
    - i. So how do we season our speech with salt?
3. I believe he gives us the answer to that in the two verses BEFORE 5 and 6
  - a. In verse 3, Paul says to the Colossian church,
    - i. *<sup>3</sup>At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST, on account of which I am in prison—<sup>4</sup>that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.*
      1. Paul's ultimate desire in this prayer request was that he would be able to speak CLEARLY about the mystery of Christ
        - a. Friends, ANYONE can speak with a form of wisdom to another person
        - b. ANYONE can be gracious in their speech to one another
    - b. But the Christian brings a noticeably different flavor to the conversation, don't they?
      - i. Because the Christian salts their speech with the mystery of Jesus Christ
- iv. The Christian isn't satisfied with just talking about some generic God that most everyone can feel comfortable talking about
  1. The Christian speaks with a different flavor
    - a. Because the Christian speaks of Jesus!
      - i. For the Christian realizes that, apart from Jesus, nothing else really matters in this life
    - b. Sure, you can have some small talk about the big football game last weekend, or a new book you're reading, or how everyone's kids or grandkids are doing
      - i. There's nothing wrong or sinful in that
        1. But at some point, we have to decide that it is time to make the best use of our time
      - ii. At some point, especially if we are dealing with outsiders, we have to season our speech with the salt of Jesus Christ
        1. Even if it's just a pinch, pray that the Spirit will guide you in wisdom
        2. Choose to be gracious in your speech
        3. And season your conversation with the wonderful mystery of Jesus
  2. Salt makes a noticeable difference in the flavor of every recipe
    - a. And the salt of Christ will make a noticeable difference in the flavor of your conversations
      - i. But there are more benefits to salt as well
4. And so, the second benefit of salt is that it acts as a PRESERVATIVE against decay
  - a. This benefit isn't one that we often think of here in the technologically advanced Western world
    - i. In our homes, if we have a roast that we just bought from the store, and we decide we don't want to cook it just yet,
      1. Well, that's not really a problem, is it?

- a. Just wrap it up... stick it in the freezer... and it'll stay good for a good long time
    - i. But freezers haven't always been around, have they?
- 2. Before the days of refrigeration, one of the easiest ways to keep your food – especially your beef, or fish, or lamb – from going bad, was to cover them in salt
  - a. In fact, some of the earliest recorded uses of salt for this purpose go all the way back to Egypt in the days before Abraham lived
    - i. And the evidence from THESE writings suggests that they had learned to use salt to preserve meat from civilizations that existed even farther back on the timeline
- 3. Now, the reason WHY salt works to preserve meats is because bacteria THRIVE in watery environments
  - a. Take away the moisture, and the bacteria dies
    - i. So, when the ancient Egyptians would catch a bunch of fish out in the Nile River,
      - 1. They would eat what they needed
        - a. And then they would take the rest and bury it in a hole, or put it in a box, that was filled with salt
        - b. The salt would pull out the moisture from the fish
        - c. And it would preserve it and keep it edible for months to come
      - 2. The salt would serve to create a pure environment that would substantially slow the decay of the food, and the food would be preserved
- b. In the same way, Christians, we are to be the salt of the earth by actively being IN the world, serving as agents of preservation in an ever-decaying society
  - i. It doesn't take long to see that things ARE decaying all around us, does it?
    - 1. The major cities all across the US are seeing more crime, more homelessness, more murders
    - 2. Our small towns are getting overrun with dispensaries
    - 3. Sexual immorality is running rampant at the highest levels of our government
      - a. And this is just here in the United States
        - i. Go outside of our country and you have nations at outright war with one another
        - ii. You have children being trafficked as slaves all over the world
        - iii. Christians are being martyred by the thousands in parts of Africa and Asia
    - b. So what do we do then? Run off and hide?
- 4. No, Christians, we remember that we have been called to be the salt of the earth
  - a. And our job is to bring PRESERVATION to a world that is on the brink of utter decay
    - i. This was what Jesus prayed in John 17, as he was preparing the disciples for his departure, and preparing his own heart for the cross
  - b. In John 17, verses 14 through 18, Jesus prayed these words...
    - i. *<sup>14</sup>I have given them [my disciples] your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup>I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup>They are not of the world, just as I am not of*

*the world. <sup>17</sup>Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup>As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.*

1. And then Jesus went on in verse 20 to say that he's not just praying these things for the disciples that were there in the room with him in that moment
  - a. He was praying it for ALL who will believe in him through the preaching of the Word
5. Jesus' prayer for you, Christian, is that the Father would sanctify you, as you are being sent out into the world
  - a. As you are being sent out to a world that hates you
  - b. As you are being sent out to a world that is full of the sons and daughters of the evil one
  - c. As you are being sent out to a world that is full of rot and decay
6. Jesus is EVEN NOW praying that YOU would be clean and pure and righteous, as you go out to be the salt of the earth
  - a. This is why we must fight to protect the purity of our minds and our hearts
  - b. This is why we must strive to guard the purity of our eyes and our ears
    - i. My friends, in a world that is becoming more and more unrighteous with every passing day
      1. We are to be agents of preservation as WE pursue the righteousness of Christ
- ii. I think it is so very interesting how Jesus concludes his Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5... Go ahead and turn there in your Bibles,
  1. We talked a few weeks ago about Jesus' teachings that it is the poor in spirit, the mournful, the meek who will inherit the earth
    - a. For this is the picture of the one who comes to Christ with a broken and contrite heart
      - i. And they humbly surrender everything to him
  2. But as the Beatitudes progress, the focus begins to shift towards a much more active obedience...
    - a. Jesus says *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied"*
      - i. And then he says, *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy..."*
      - ii. *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"*
      - iii. *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God"*
    - b. And then Jesus throws a wrench in it all in verses 10-12,
      - i. <sup>10</sup>*"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup>"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*
        1. Jesus says to his followers, "Hunger and thirst for righteousness and purity and humility...
          - a. And as you do so, know this...
            - i. The world will persecute you for it."
        2. They're going to hate you for looking and acting different than they do

3. They're going to revile you and persecute you because your speech is seasoned with the salt of Christ
  - c. Just think back to Paul's words back in Colossians 4, as he was asking the other Christians to pray that he would be able to speak of the Gospel more
    - i. He said to them, "This is the message on account of which I am in prison... now pray that I will get to talk about it even more!"
3. Paul understood that we are called to be IN the world, as we seek to proclaim the ONLY message that can drive back the decay
  - a. And so Jesus calls us to a pursuit of righteousness
  - b. He calls us to a life of purity
  - c. He assures us that, when we live in such a way, the world will hate us
    - i. And then look at Matthew 5:13...
      1. *"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."*
    - ii. Jesus looks at his disciples – he looks at us, and he says to us,
      1. "This is why I have chosen you"
4. If your conversations are void of the noticeably different flavor of Christ, then you have become like salt that has lost its saltiness
  - a. It's lost its primary purpose for existence
    - i. And therefore it is no longer good for anything
5. If you've lost your thirst and your hunger for righteousness... if you've given up your fight to remain pure in your eyes and in your heart...
  - a. Then you non longer have the ability to be an agent of preservation in a decaying world
    - i. You've lost your primary purpose for existence
      1. You've become like salt that has lost its saltiness
        - a. And it is no longer good for anything
- iii. In 2 Kings chapter 2 some men come from the city of Jericho to the prophet Elisha, and they ask him to come and minister in their city
  1. The problem was, the water in Jericho was bad
    - a. It poisoned the people so the women could not bear children, and it poisoned the land so that it could not bear any produce
      - i. So Elijah said to the men of the city, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it"
        1. And he took this bowl of salt, and threw it into the spring of water, and he said to the people of Jericho,
          - a. <sup>21</sup>*"Thus says the Lord, I have healed this water; from now on neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it."*
        2. And verse 22 says,
          - a. <sup>22</sup>*the water has been healed to this day, according to the word that Elisha spoke.*
  - b. Brothers and sisters in Christ, you are to be the salt that God pours into the springs of the land
    - i. YOU are the ONLY salt that can bring the hope of Christ to a dying people
    - ii. YOU are the ONLY salt that can bring the healing power of Jesus to a poisoned city

- iii. YOU are the salt of the earth!
- iv. Well, there are SO MANY other benefits that salt brings to our lives
  - 1. We could look at SO MANY other spiritual analogies for salt
    - a. For those of you who garden, before you plant your seeds next year, you can roll them in salt first, and the salt will protect them from pests like snails and slugs
      - i. That has a discipleship lesson, doesn't it?
        - 1. The Scriptures call us to die to ourselves, and be like seeds who are planted in the ground, that will then sprout up with new life
      - ii. So if those of us who are mature believers truly live as the salt of the earth,
        - 1. Then we'll surround those baby Christians, those newly planted seeds
          - a. And we'll provide protection for them from all the pests of the enemy that will be sent to destroy their newfound faith in Jesus
    - b. If you've got a cast iron skillet that has a bunch of old food caked on it, you can use a mixture of salt and water to scour the pan and make it smooth again
      - i. There's a lesson in Christian accountability there
        - 1. When we live as the salt of the earth towards one another, we can help each other scour the sin out of our lives...
          - a. The sin that has started to get caked onto our hearts
            - i. It's not always pleasant to have our brothers and sisters hold us accountable in our fight against sin,
          - b. But sometimes the best solution to our struggles is the hardest solution
            - i. Sometimes our hearts NEED to be scoured
- v. We could go on and on, but we will finish with just one more analogy of salt that is found in the Scriptures
  - 1. We saw how salt is beneficial in bringing a noticeably different flavor to our conversations
  - 2. We saw how salt is beneficial in pushing back rot and decay
- 5. And the third benefit is this, salt reminds us of the Covenant we have with God our Father
  - a. To see this, we need to go back in the Old Testament, as God is giving His laws to the Levitical priests
    - i. So, turn in your Bibles to the book of Leviticus, chapter 2
      - 1. In this chapter, God is giving all of His instructions regarding the grain offerings the people are to bring
        - a. These grain offerings serve a couple of different purposes
          - i. A portion of the grain, along with the wine and oil and spices that were given with it, were burned upon the altar as an offering to God
            - 1. This was the memorial portion that belonged to the Lord
          - ii. But another portion of the grain and wine and oil was then set aside, and this was what Aaron and his sons would get to enjoy in their own meals
      - 2. So we read about the grain offerings in verses 1 through 12



- a. But then we get to verse 13, where we read these words...
  - i. *<sup>13</sup>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.*
    - 1. The Lord says through Moses, "Make sure all your GRAIN offerings are seasoned with salt"
    - 2. But then He adds at the end, "Make sure ALL your offerings are seasoned with salt"
      - a. Why?
        - i. Because it is the salt of the covenant they had with God!
- ii. We find this again in the next book of Numbers, so flip over to Numbers, chapter 18
  - 1. In this chapter, God is once again giving His instructions to Aaron and his sons, and He says to them in verse 8,
    - a. *<sup>8</sup>"Behold, I have given you charge of the contributions made to me, all the consecrated things of the people of Israel. I have given them to you as a portion and to your sons as a perpetual due."*
  - 2. And then look down at verse 19...
    - a. *<sup>19</sup>"All the holy contributions that the people of Israel present to the Lord I give to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due. It is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord for you and for your offspring with you."*
  - 3. So what is going on here with this language of "a covenant of salt"?
    - a. That's not really something we're familiar with, is it?
      - i. What's fascinating is that this WOULD have been familiar language to the people in THOSE days
    - b. In the Ancient Middle East, there was already a common practice of kings making covenants with lesser kings, or kings making covenants with their people
      - i. In our study in Genesis in Sunday School, we saw this a few weeks back when Abraham slaughtered a bunch of animals, and cut them in two
        - 1. And then God passed through the halves of the animals...
          - a. He passed through their blood
            - i. Signifying that He would be the One who would uphold the covenant He was making with Abraham
        - 2. As we talked about that morning, that was a common practice among the kings and their servants of those days
  - 4. In the same way, it was also common practice for covenants to be made using salt
    - a. In certain covenantal ceremonies, the king would gather with all of his people, and they would eat a meal together
      - i. And in this meal, the king would provide the salt to the people, and they would often eat it with bread and oil
        - 1. This salt signified the covenant between the king and his people
    - ii. Just think about it for a moment...
      - 1. Let's say you get a papercut on your thumb, or maybe it gets poked with a sharp object

- a. What's the first thing we often do to help stop the bleeding?
      - i. You stick your thumb in your mouth, don't you?
  - 2. And what do you taste, even in just a small drop of your own blood?
    - a. SALT, right?
  - b. Remember what we talked about at the beginning of the sermon...
    - i. God has created our bodies to need salt in order to function properly
      - 1. Salt helps our electrolytes stay properly balanced
        - a. And all those electrolytes travel... in your blood
- iii. So, back to these covenantal banquets that the kings would hold for their people
  - 1. It would be pretty irrational, and really, pretty gross, if the king offered up his own blood for everyone to share in as a sign of his covenant with him
    - a. So what's a perfect symbolic representation of his own blood?
      - i. The SALT from his own table!
  - b. The king would share his salt with his people, as if it was his very own blood
    - i. We actually get a picture of how widespread this practice was in the book of Ezra
      - 1. In Ezra, chapter 4, the people of Israel have returned from their exile in Babylon and Persia, and they've started rebuilding the Temple of God
        - a. As they do so, the surrounding nations of non-Israelites wanted to be a part of the rebuilding
      - 2. But the heads of the Israelites said to them, "This Temple is for OUR God, so we alone will build it"
    - ii. Well, the other nations didn't like that response, so they wrote a letter to King Artaxerxes of Persia, to slander the Jews and to end the rebuilding of the Temple
      - 1. And in this letter, they wrote...
        - a. <sup>13</sup>Now be it known to the king that if this city is rebuilt and the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, custom, or toll, and the royal revenue will be impaired. <sup>14</sup>Now BECAUSE WE EAT THE SALT OF THE PALACE and it is not fitting for us to witness the king's dishonor, therefore we send and inform the king of all that is going on..."
    - iii. These other nations were subject to the King of Persia, and they reminded him of their covenant relationship with him,
      - 1. For they were the ones who ate the salt of the palace
- iv. Brothers and sisters in Christ, the God of all creation has chosen to enter into a covenant with His people
  - 1. In the days of the Old Testament priests, this covenant was signified by the salt of the covenant
    - a. For God is not flesh and blood... He is SPIRIT
      - i. So throughout the centuries, He shared the salt of the earth with His people
  - 2. But a time did come when he would share His blood
    - a. When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman

- i. The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us
      - 1. And through the blood of Jesus that was shed upon the cross, we have now once again entered into a covenant with our God
        - a. This New Covenant is an eternal covenant, an everlasting covenant
      - 2. By a single offering of his very own blood, Christ has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified
    - ii. The symbolic salt of the covenant has been replaced by the reality of the blood of the Covenant
  - b. And now, our King has given each of us the commission to spread the word of this New Covenant to the ends of the earth
    - i. He doesn't tell us to do this by taking his blood to the nations
    - ii. He commissions us to once again be the salt of the earth
      - 1. WE are now the salt of the covenant, as we lay our own lives upon the altar of sacrifice
        - a. As we seek to flavor all our conversations with the noticeably different flavor of Christ
        - b. As we seek to push back the decay of the world by living lives of righteousness and purity
- b. You, Christians, are the salt of the earth
  - i. *"Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*