

You Are Salt; Matthew 5:13

I. Comparisons

A. Jesus makes some grand (and true) statements about Himself

1. I AM the Light
2. I AM the Door
3. I AM the Bread
4. I AM the Shepherd

B. He also makes some other comparisons that seem pretty grand (and are just as true)

II. Salt

A. When we think of salt, we think of table salt

1. Flavors our food
2. Ingredient in many recipes
3. Sometimes we think of rock salt that helps us make ice cream
4. For many years salt has been a staple in all households
5. We even set out salt on our tables in the Fellowship Hall when we share meals together
6. But that is not the original purpose of salt

B. "Worth his salt"

1. To be effective and efficient; deserving of one's pay
2. "Our word salary derives from the Latin salarium, (sal is the Latin word for salt). There is some debate over the origin of the word salarium, but most scholars accept that it was the money allowed to Roman soldiers for the purchase of salt." ¹
3. "The expression "not worth his salt" stems from the practice of trading slaves for salt in ancient Greece." ²
4. This phrase has absolutely nothing to do with taste

C. Salt was in general use long before the beginning of recorded history, dating back to around 2700 B.C.

1. "The earliest known treatise on pharmacology was published in China. A major portion of this writing is devoted to a discussion of more than 40 kinds of salt, including descriptions of two methods of salt extraction that are similar to processes used today.
2. Salt production has been important in China for two millennia or more, and the Chinese, like many other governments over time, realized that taxing salt would could be a major revenue source.
3. Nomads spreading westward were known to carry salt, and Egyptian art from as long ago as 1450 B.C. records salt making." ³

D. The human body requires salt to function

1. The body uses sodium to maintain fluid levels. A balance of fluid and sodium is necessary for the health of the heart, liver, and kidneys. It regulates blood fluids and prevents low blood pressure." ⁴
2. Too little salt can cause Addison Disease, an under-active thyroid, heart failure to name a few

¹ Martin, Gary. "'Worth One's Salt' - the Meaning and Origin of This Phrase." Phrasefinder, www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/worth-ones-salt.html.

² "History of Salt?" Gourmet Sea Salts and Bath Salts from SaltWorks, Inc., America's Sea Salt Company, www.seasalt.com/history-of-salt.

³ Ibid

⁴ Nordqvist, Christian. "Salt: Uses, Effects, and Sources." Medical News Today, MediLexicon International, 28 July 2017, www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/146677.php.

3. Too much salt can cause Osteoporosis, kidney disease, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease and stroke
 - E. While all of these things show the importance of salt, it is its function as a preservative that I think Jesus is pointing to here
- III. Preservative
- A. Before refrigeration, the main method of preserving food was salt — Iceland was known for its export of sun-dried salted cod
 1. Salt inhibits the ability of bacteria to grow by removing water (which is the way bacteria spreads in food)
 2. A concentration of 20% salt will kill bacteria
 - B. Matthew 5:13 (ESV); “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.
 - C. Don’t get caught up in this idea of taste
 1. “Has lost its taste” — make foolish, show to be foolish ⁵
 2. When salt has lost its ability to be a preservative, what good is it?
 - D. We are that preservative!
 1. We are the salt of the earth — it is absolutely amazing to me that Jesus would make this statement!
 2. We are the preservative for society
 3. We model God’s word, God’s love, Jesus’ example
 4. Matthew 22:37–40 (ESV); ³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”
 5. Philippians 2:1–8 (ESV); ¹ So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
 - E. By modeling God’s word, God’s love and Jesus’ example we give others the opportunity to be released from the rot and decay of our society
- IV. You Are Salt
- A. Tasked with preserving society from the sin that eats away at it
 - B. Standing up for God through His Son, Jesus
 - C. An example for those in our community to emulate

⁵ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 663.