

# THE SALT OF THE EARTH

ANDY SNOKE

*"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men"* (Matthew 5:13, NKJV).

Jesus spoke these words to His disciples as part of what is referred to as, "The Sermon on the Mount." This special sermon is full of gold! It is full of precious truths covering a variety of topics that are relative to us in this hour.

However, because the monetary value of salt is much different in our times, we can easily misunderstand how important these words that Jesus spoke are. As far as cost is concerned, salt is relatively cheap and plentiful in our day. But in Jesus' day, it was somewhat rare and very costly.

Here is a list of some of the characteristics of salt, and a little history of it.

1. Salt hinders the spread of corruption (as Christians should).
2. Salt creates thirst. (Blessed are those who thirst for righteousness).
3. Salt enhances flavor.
4. Salt preserves.

## **The History of Salt (taken from various sources)**

"Salt comes from dead, dried-up seas, or living ones. It can bubble to the surface as brine or crop out in the form of salt licks and shallow caverns. Below the skin of the earth, it lies in white veins, some of them thousands of feet deep. It can be evaporated from salt "pans," boiled down from brine, or mined, as it often is today, from shafts extending half a mile down.

The history of the world with regard to salt is simple: animals wore paths to salt licks; men followed; trails became roads, and settlements grew beside them.

When the human menu shifted from salt-rich game to cereals, more salt was needed to supplement the diet. But the underground deposits were beyond reach, and the salt sprinkled over the surface was insufficient. Scarcity kept the mineral precious.

As civilization spread, salt became one of the world's principal trading commodities. Salt routes crisscrossed the globe. One of the most travelled led from Morocco south across the Sahara to Timbuktu. Ships bearing salt from Egypt to Greece traversed the Mediterranean and the Aegean seas. Herodotus describes a caravan route that united the salt oases of the Libyan desert.

1. Hinder the spread of corruption. When others spread and speak words of division and corruption, our words should be full of grace, stopping corruption from spreading from us to others.
2. Create thirst. Our lives should cause others to “thirst” for what they see displayed in our lives. *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear”* (1 Peter 3:15, NKJV).
3. Enhance flavor. Don’t you just love being around positive, happy people? It makes everything delightful! The “Joy of the Lord” is contagious. Let us enhance the flavor of our time with our families, friends, fellow church members, and the public by the way we live.
4. Preserve. We are preserved by the presence of God. We have had our names written down in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Our lives can help “preserve” the presence of God in a continually dark world. †

# PAUL AMUNDSON

*judgements, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy*



*life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou riseth up” (Deuteronomy 6:1-7).*

It is good to review some of the aspects of the revelation that came when God poured out His Spirit in 1948.

To start with, children were to sit with their parents in the general congregation and not in what was referred to as Sunday school. The reason for this was so that they could observe and sense the anointing of the Holy Spirit and begin to recognize it. Secondly, the parents were to take the things that were taught and then explain them to their children so they could understand them.

Now we begin to see where the family altar plays an important place in the family.

- Depending on the age of your children, you can have a conversation on any particular subject to the extent that they understand it more clearly.
- Starting when they are quite young, you can have books for children that show various events in Christian history. Examples could be the true Christmas story, the true Easter story, the events in the lives of the patriarchs of old such as Abraham, Joseph, David, Jonah, Daniel, the three Hebrew children, etc.
- You can teach them songs that relate to those events in history as well as the songs we love and sing on a regular basis in the local assemblies.
- You can give them a chance to begin to say simple prayers, learning that they can talk to God just like they talk to their parents.

There is no specific formula to follow. Your children develop their character from both parents. You know how to spiritually train your own children better than anyone else. Singers will spend more time singing, teachers will spend more time reading and teaching and exhorters will spend more time in discussion and so on.

I want to tell you something the Lord made real to me. Although it is not Apostolic doctrine, I feel it would be good for parents to hear. I am not sure how the event prompted this, but it came to my mind as follows:

“You get a relatively short time to train your child and to guide them, and the rest of their lives is spent mostly in praying for them.”

If you are a teacher, which I am not, you will understand that from ages 1-6 years, you have almost complete control of the environment your children experience. They listen to you and learn to obey, they learn the difference between yes and no, as well as the consequences of some of their actions.

From ages 6-18, they are in school and are being influenced by many different voices, attitudes and actions. Here is where you let them bring problems, questions, concerns, and things that they never saw in their own home back into the family fold. In your time at the family altar, these can be addressed and you can show your children how to deal with them in a Christian way. In this way, struggles addressed when they are still small will not turn into bigger issues later.

You can pray with them and teach them that the first place to go for an answer is to the Lord. If you show them that you trust the Lord and that He is important to you, then they will see that and have confidence in the Lord as well. You can relieve anxiety, show them that love conquers all and that Jesus loves everyone, even those that maybe don't treat you the best.

What you are establishing in their hearts is to respect (reverence) and appreciate the Lord.

You are giving them the ability to learn how to pray, sing, and have reverence so that when they mature they will not be as fearful to minister in the local assembly. They will be excited to get up in front of the local assembly and give their verse, or to sing a new song they have learned at the family altar.

You are not teaching your children how to perform. You are teaching them how to exercise their gifts so they can develop their ministry in the body of Christ.

Don't beat yourselves up and think you have to meet any predetermined standard that actually no one has set. Some children are shy and need more time and patience to have confidence. Others are more extroverted and it is easier for them. Again, we don't use a measuring stick. We encourage each of the little ones to participate.

*“But Jesus said, ‘suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven’” (Matthew 19:14).*

Your elders will be very patient and supportive of your efforts and will admonish the general assembly that God is very patient with them as well. We should never forget that.

It is such a blessing to see the enthusiasm of children run to the front so they can do their part in the service.

The family altar may be a time when they accept Jesus as their Saviour. If your children are maturing:

- You can speak to them about water baptism. There is no age requirement to this as long as they have given their heart to the Lord and understand what they are entering into.
- They can begin to seek the Lord to be filled with the Holy Spirit. There is no age requirement for this experience. Jesus began his public ministry at the age of 13.
- Once they have experienced these steps in their walk with the Lord, you can see if it becomes time to talk to them regarding having hands laid on them, receiving their spiritual gifts and being set in the body of Christ by the body of elders God has set in the church. This might not happen for a while but it is good to discuss this with maturing children. Local elders, when they feel there are those that are ready to have prophecy go over them, will advise the travelling brethren of the need, and they will seek the Lord regarding when to come. Again, there is no exact age for this to take place. The Lord will indicate.


A family altar goes far beyond the children. It starts with a new family (husband and wife immediately after marriage), praying, reading, singing together, sharing your worries, your concerns, and talking about the good things of the Lord. It is a time set aside before the Lord to establish your relationship, so you know you are both heading in the same direction. If you read Bro. Hinchliff's article on "The Family Altar" in the book, "Building God's House" on p.358, he mentions that the survival rate of marriages is extremely high when there is a family altar. Undoubtedly, the enemy is out to kill and destroy our marriages. However, the family altar does wonders to prevent that.

Not everyone was brought up in a Christian home. Not every Christian home exercised the family altar. I would not like to make anyone feel like a failure so I will quote, *"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved"* (John 3:17).

You can't change your past and only the enemy of our soul will remind us of it. The good news is, today is a new day, and we can reestablish these truths that the Lord revealed to His church. He has the ability to restore all that was lost in the years that have passed.

There is a lot more a teacher could add to this, but let's be encouraged to take advantage of every opportunity we have to keep the enemy from our door and walk closer with the Lord, entering into the wonderful promises He has in store for those who are faithful to the end. Be of good cheer, God has wonderful things in store for his church.

If you struggle with a family altar, ask your elders to advise and stand with you in prayer. They are there to help and love you along the way.

God bless you and let's "Keep on keeping on." 

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