

Volume 15 Issue 5

February 2, 2020

HAVE SALT WITHIN YOURSELVES

"Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear," (Lk. 14:34-35).

This is one of several contexts in the teaching of Jesus where the metaphor of salt is used. If we take a brief look at every instance in which Jesus brought this illustration into view, perhaps it will shed light on exactly what it is Jesus is warning us to beware of lest we lose our effectiveness in the Kingdom. In Mark 9 the disciples are discussing amongst themselves which one is the greatest (Mk. 9:33-34). Jesus confronts them and says that the one who would be first will be the one who is *"last of all and servant of all,"* (Mk. 9:35). He then takes a child in His arms and starts to illustrate His point,

when John interrupts with a question about someone who is not a part of their "circle" who is healing in Jesus' name. Jesus tells them not to hinder him but rather to embrace and accept the work he is doing to promote the cause of Christ and concludes the discussion talking about salt.

"Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another," (Mk. 9:50). In Luke 14, Jesus turned to the multitudes who were going along with Him and talked about the cost of discipleship. Jesus plainly says, *"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions,"* (Lk. 14:33). He then concludes, *"Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? It is useless either for the soil or*

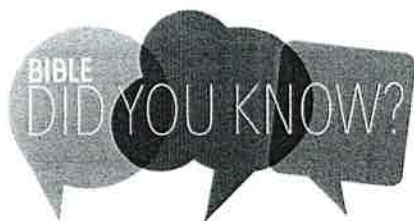
for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear," (Lk. 14:34-35). In Matthew 5 Jesus reveals the focus of the heart of those who enter the Kingdom in the form of the "beatitudes". He then says, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men," (Mt. 5:13).

Examining all three of these texts, we see the full depiction of "salty disciples". A salty disciple has no self-seeking ambition. A salty disciple has crucified a dependence-based relationship with worldly possessions in their heart. A salty disciple has filled their heart with a complete desire and need to be a faithful citizen busy at work in the Kingdom of God. What is interesting is all three of these aspects of salty discipleship are depicted in Luke's record of Jesus' use of the salt metaphor. Jesus demonstrates the vital aspect of suppressing any selfish ambition in Luke 14 by teaching a parable of the honor one receives when they seat themselves in a lower place than they deserve at a wedding feast. "*When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do*

not take the place of honor, for someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you 'Give your place to this man,' and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place. But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted,"" (Lk. 14:8-11). Jesus further exemplifies this salty quality of one saturated in selfless humility by telling the host who invited Jesus to be careful of only inviting well to do close acquaintances to dinner parties, but rather including the poor, crippled, lame and blind as evidence of a selfless desire to serve others who cannot possibly repay him back (Lk. 14:12-14). Jesus then emphasizes our necessity to crucify any dependence-based love relationship with possessions or relationships of this world as salty disciples. He does so by telling a story about individuals whose love and dependency for things such as

land, oxen and a wife was so great they felt justified to offer them as excuses to decline the invitation to be at the great dinner (Lk. 14:16-24). Jesus makes it plain that a “salty” or effective disciple is one who has crucified their dependence upon worldly possessions or relationships to give their heart completely to the spiritual aspects of Christ’s Kingdom. *“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple...So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions,”* (Lk. 14:26-27,33). Jesus warns us in this text that the biggest threat towards our “salty” effectiveness in doing the work of the Kingdom of God in this world is a desire for self-promotion and dependency on possessions and relationships for self-satisfaction. When these aspects of our heart are corrupted, there will be no room for the truly satisfying spiritual aspects of the Kingdom to grow in our hearts, and we will be good for nothing as useful servants of the King to promote

and invite others to His banquet. *“He who has ears to hear, let him hear,”* (Lk. 14:35).
– Daniel Ruegg



“But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’ For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
Matthew 25:26-30



MONTHLY CHALLENGE

DIRECTIONS: Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

1) Personal Evangelism Challenge

Acts 8:3-4 "But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word." As I think about those early Christians, so excited about the powerful saving grace of the gospel of the resurrected Savior who died for sinners, it's hard not to share their level of enthusiasm. We are so blessed to have the current religious freedom to be able to enthusiastically share this powerful message with others without fearing for our lives as so many did and in many places still do today. I can't think of a better way to make full use of that freedom and put that enthusiasm to use than to invite a lost soul over to your home and see how far you can get in sharing that message with them. Think of it this way, hospitality is not an option but rather a command for Christians to be engaged in. "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it," Heb. 13:2. Evangelism is also not an option but a command for Christians to be engaged in as well. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations," Matt. 28:19. Since it is inevitable that we will all answer to God for our obedience to both commands, why not combine the two, and practice hospitality as an open door to sharing the gospel?

2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

Psalms 26:1-12

"Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering. Examine me, O LORD, and try me; test my mind and heart. For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth. I do not sit with deceitful men, nor will I go with pretenders. I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked. I shall wash my hands in innocence, and I will go about Your altar, O LORD, that I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving and declare all Your wonders. O LORD, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells. Do not take my soul away along with sinners, nor my life with men of bloodshed, in whose hands is a wicked scheme, and whose right hand is full of bribes. But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me. My foot stands on a level place; in the congregations I shall bless the LORD."