

Intro: Salt is everywhere. We see it on many restaurant tables and it may be on some of our dinner tables. Salt is used for many things. Some put a shake of it in the water they intend to boil. It is used in a water softener to soften hard water. It is used to melt ice on walks and roads. We use it to make our food more palatable or to preserve it. Salt has many uses. Jesus speaks about salt in our text. As we meditate on these words of Jesus we will find what this salt is about which Jesus speaks and discover what uses it has in our Christian lives. We will do well to heed Jesus' exhortation: **Have God's Salt in Yourselves**. This is so because **1) God's salt is good, 2) God's salt preserves, and 3) God's salt seasons**.

I. God's salt is good (49-50)

- A. God's salt serves a good purpose
 - 1. salt is God's Word
 - a. doctors tell us that salt is not good for a person
 - b. that too much will raise a person's blood pressure and heighten her risk of having a heart attack or stroke
 - c. Jesus, however, states that **"salt is good"**
 - d. but what is this salt about which Jesus speaks?
 - e. certainly not the kind of salt doctors speak about and which we use for many things
 - f. considering what the salt Jesus speaks about is able to do, as we will soon find out
 - g. we are convinced that the salt Jesus speaks about here is the Word of God
 - h. and this salt is, indeed, good
 - i. the Greek word here translated 'good' actually means excellent
 - j. excellent in its nature
 - k. God's Word is truly excellent in its nature; it is perfect and unchangeable
 - 2. this salt serves a good purpose
 - a. and it serves a very good purpose in the lives of those who have it
 - b. this salt purifies thoroughly those who have it
 - c. and helps them live God-pleasing lives
 - d. now, when salt comes into contact with an open wound like a hangnail or a paper cut it burns
 - e. sometimes the Word of God burns like salt on an open wound
 - f. especially when the law condemns and eradicates all that is rotten and evil inside a person
 - g. but then that same Word, through the gospel, comes and heals the wounds caused by the law
 - h. the Word of God serves a good purpose in the lives of those who have it
- B. Salt must be used
 - 1. salt cannot become saltless
 - a. but, like salt that becomes saltless and, therefore, becomes useless
 - b. so the Word of God, when it is not used, cannot be effective
 - c. the Word of God must be used so that it can serve its good purpose
 - 2. have salt in self
 - a. that is why Jesus tells his disciples **"have salt in yourselves"**
 - b. the salt, the Word of God, must be in a person
 - c. it must be part of that person's life and in that person's heart and mind
 - d. and it must be used in life's manifold situations

- e. if not, it cannot function as God desires and intends
 - 3. application
 - a. this salt can do amazing and beneficial things in our lives
 - b. so let us make sure that we have this salt in us which God has graciously given to us and preserved among us
 - c. let us do as Paul encourages us in **(Co 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...")**
 - d. let us make the Word a part of our lives – having it in our hearts and minds
 - e. so that it can function in our lives as God intends and desires
- Trans: God's salt is good because God's salt is his Word that serves a good purpose in our lives. One of those good purposes is that...

II. God's salt preserves (42-48)

- A. Sin is serious
 - 1. all types of sin
 - a. salt was used by the ancient people to preserve perishable foods like meat
 - b. likewise, God's salt is used as a preservative
 - c. sin is a very serious matter
 - d. Jesus speaks of two types of sin
 - e. either a person committing sin himself
 - f. or causing someone else to sin by a sinful example
 - g. either type of sin is a serious matter and cannot be taken lightly
 - 2. sin leads to hell
 - a. because any sin and all sin leads to hell
 - b. Jesus speaks of hell as a terrible place
 - c. he describes it as a place **"where their worm never dies"**
 - d. the worm he speaks about is a worm that feed on dead bodies
 - e. Jesus further describes hell as a place **"where the fire never goes out"**
 - f. Isaiah agrees **(Is 66:24, "And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die nor will their fire be quenched...")**
 - g. this is not politically correct in our day nor is it pleasant to hear
 - h. but it is true and it needs to be said
 - i. sin is serious and leads to a horrible place called hell
- B. Avoid sin at all costs
 - 1. go to great lengths to avoid sin
 - a. since sin is so serious and leads to such a horrible place
 - b. a person will want to go to great lengths to avoid it
 - c. Jesus uses a rather strong example to make that exact point
 - d. **(43-47)**
 - e. Jesus' words are not to be taken literally
 - f. if one did he would finally have no members and still be sinful
 - g. rather, with this forceful example Jesus shows how serious sin is
 - h. and to what great lengths to which a person will go to avoid sinning
 - i. or to avoid causing someone else to sin
 - 2. how one can avoid sinning
 - a. so, how can one make sure to avoid sinning and causing others to sin?
 - b. by having God's Word in one's self
 - c. because the Word of God gives a person the strength and ability
 - d. to fight sin, temptation, and the devil
 - e. to control the sinful nature inside
 - f. and to live God-pleasing lives that will not cause anyone to sin
 - 3. application

- a. so, let us have God's salt in ourselves
- b. let us make it a part of our lives and have it in our hearts and minds
- c. when we do, we will avoid sinning in the ways Jesus speaks about
- d. and we will be preserved from that horrible place called hell

Trans: God's salt is good because it preserves us from hell. God's salt is also good because...

III. God's salt seasons (38-41)

A. Sin strains relationships

- 1. attempt to stop man
 - a. some of us might put salt on our food before or after we cook it
 - b. to enhance its taste or improve its palatability
 - c. in a similar way, God's salt has the ability to season or improve people's relationships with others
 - d. John related an incident to Jesus in which he and the other disciples repeatedly tried to stop a man from driving out demons in Jesus' name
- 2. jealousy and pride were the cause
 - a. their reason was that this man was not one of them
 - b. he was not one of the Twelve and they felt that only they had the right to do such things
 - c. plus, in an incident just previous to our text, the disciples themselves were not able to exorcise a demon
 - d. it seems that jealousy and pride were most likely the cause of their attempt to stop the man
 - e. and they were seeking Jesus' approval

B. Be at peace with others

- 1. Jesus' response
 - a. but Jesus' response was not what they were expecting
 - b. Jesus tells them not to stop the man
 - c. because by his action he was showing that he was one with Jesus and his disciples
 - d. they should allow him to serve
 - e. and allow anyone even the smallest of good deeds for Jesus' sake
 - f. because such deeds are God-pleasing and will be rewarded by grace
 - g. be at peace with others, Jesus says
 - h. let there be no jealousy, competition, or contention
 - i. rather, be happy that others are using their gifts to serve
- 2. how to avoid jealousy and pride
 - a. once again, the ability to do as Jesus directs will come from God's salt
 - b. from having God's salt in one's self
 - c. it will burn out the jealousy and pride from a person's heart
 - d. and purify a person's thought process
 - e. making him or her peaceable and happy that others have such abilities
 - f. and that they are using those abilities to serve Jesus
- 3. application
 - a. it is easy for us to get jealous of the abilities of others
 - b. to be envious of the one who has what we perceive as better abilities than we have
 - c. or more visible talents than we have
 - d. at such times we will need to let the salt that is in us work on us
 - e. and lead us to be at peace with others
 - f. and to rejoice with them and encourage them

C. Law and Gospel

1. law
 - a. as we look at these words of Jesus we immediately know we are guilty
 - b. guilty of sinning ourselves; guilty of jealousy and pride
 - c. guilty of causing others to sin by our own sinful example
 - d. guilty of taking our sin so lightly
 - e. when it is, in fact, a great offense against our holy God
 - f. for which we deserve to be punished as Jesus says
 - g. in the painful torment of hell
 2. gospel
 - a. but we have our Jesus thankfully
 - b. through whom we are spared from hell
 - c. he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins
 - d. he is the One who intercedes for us when we do sin
 - e. and always wins our forgiveness before God
 - f. that will lead us to life after death
 - g. and to eternal life in that wonderful Paradise called heaven
 - h. (1Jn 2:1,2, “But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense-Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins...”)**
- Concl: Knowing how much good it does for you, have God’s salt in yourselves!