

White Gold saltI. Slide1 **Announce:**

A. Slide2 Christmas Eve Services: 3,7,9pm. It's a program w/in a service.

II. Slide3a **Intro: White Gold** aka salt

A. Slide3b 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 & trampled underfoot by men. *You are the **light** of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

B. Slide4-6 Jesus uses 2 important elements in their day (**salt & light**) to *paint a picture* of what it is to be *a faithful christian witness*. Remember, the Beatitudes are *impossible* to live out in **private**, they are powerfully **social & outward**.

C. Jesus didn't tell us we should **Be** salt & light. He tells us we **Are** salt & light (ie. believers)

1. Eph.5:8, *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.*

2. We cannot **CHANGE** what we are, but we can **WASTE** what we are.

a) The Salt can *lose* its saltiness, & the Light can be *dimmed*. [not salv issue, *Witness* issue]

D. Salt & Light balance each other

1. Salt is hidden...it works *secretly & slowly*.

2. Light is seen...it works *openly & quickly*.

a) As **salt** you'll convict unbelievers, as **light** you'll show them good works of love.

b) **Salt** must *make contact*...**Light** must *be seen*.

c) **Salt** is symbolic of the *believer's inward character*.

While **light** is symbolic of the *believer's outward testimony*.

E. Slide7 So Jesus speaks this truth forth from *the land of Salt*. (Dead Sea Facts)

1. Even today, Israeli companies generate around **\$3 billion** annually from the sale of *Dead Sea minerals* (primarily potash & bromine).

2. Salt in the **Dead Sea** is *10 times higher* than our oceans salinity.

3. Its tremendous reserve is estimated at *22 thousand million tons of magnesium chloride, 12 thousand million tons of common salt, 6 thousand million tons of calcium chloride, two thousand million tons of potassium chloride, and one thousand million tons of magnesium bromide.*
 4. It was one of the world's *first health resorts* for Herod The Great (Masada winter home)
- F. **Slide8 Today** we'll take **salt** the 1st of the 2 metaphors...*next week* we'll take **light**.
 [Christmas theme this year: Kelly's, *Jesus brings light to the night*. Gilbert/Johnny Anne's *The Glorious Light of God*. My *Loves Pure Light*]
1. (msg) *Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be **salt-seasoning** that brings out the **God-flavors** of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.*

III. Slide9 SALTS VALUE

- A. **Salt/light** are commodities that we take for granted, **but** in bible x's they were *greatly valued*
- B. **Slide10** Salts uses and values?
 1. Salt is an essential element in the **diets** of *human, animals and even plants*. **Not only** does it **flavor our food**, **but** it **aids in digestion**.
 2. Salt **can't** be destroyed by **fire** or **time**.
 3. **The oceans contain 50 million billion tons of salt**.
 4. It was used by ancient Egyptians to **preserve mummies**.
 5. In China in 2700 BC, *Peng-Tzoa-Kan-Mu* wrote a treatise about salt. He discovered that there were (at that time) **more than 40 different kinds** of salt **[14,000 uses now!]** and that there were **2 methods of extracting salt**: Sea water is **evaporated**, and rock salt is **mined**.
 6. **Salt served as money** at various times and places. We get the phrase *not worth his salt* from Ancient Greek practice of *buying slaves in exchange for salt*.
 - a) Roman soldiers were given *Salarium Argentum* or salt rations. Where we get our word *salary*. [why **superstitions** developed about it being **bad luck** to **spill** your salt]
 7. When Leonardo da Vinci painted the **last supper**, he put an **overturned salt cellar** in front of Judas.

8. **More wars** have been fought over **salt** than **gold**.
9. Thousands of **Napoleons' troops** died during his retreat from Moscow **because** they didn't have enough **salt to treat their wounds**.
10. **In the US, during the Civil War**, Northern Armies **cut off** the **supply** of salt to Confederate troops **by** encamping near salt deposits near New Orleans.
11. **There are 30 references** to salt in the Bible.
12. It was used to **destroy** (fields) in Judges 9:45.
13. It was for **covenant making** in Numb.18:19.
14. **Job** gives *my life verse*, **Can flavorless food be eaten without salt?** 6:6a
15. **Lots wife** looked back as Sodom was being destroyed **and** was turned into a pillar of salt.
16. When **Elijah** **sweetened the waters at Jericho** he cast **salt** into them to demonstrate the *purifying power* of salt.
17. **All sacrifices** be salted before they were offered to God. Lev.2:13
18. **Newborn babies** were rubbed with salt. **Read** Ezek.16:4
19. A grain of salt placed in a **tooth cavity** was the usual remedy for a *toothache*.
20. There was **no refrigeration** in those days, meat and fish were packed in salt to **draw blood and moisture** from them.
 - a) **So** when Jesus said, *You are the salt of the earth*, **He was saying that, you as His follower have Value. You are Important to God. You possess something that the rest of the world needs for life.**

IV. Slide11 **LOSING OUR TASTE** *or desalination* [like Carlsbad plant, 50 mill. gallons a day]

- A. **Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?** Mark 9:50
 1. Salt is good **only as long as it** contains the **characteristics** of saltiness.
 2. **What do you do with gum that loses its taste?** (it goes rt under your chair)
 3. **When a thing loses its essential quality, & fails to perform its essential duty, it is fit for nothing but to be thrown away.**
- B. **Salt/tang** (a sharp strong taste) *the quality of discipleship* - Risk was of *insipidity* (dull, bland, w/o flavor).

1. The Christian by his courage, his hope, his cheerfulness, & his kindness, brings a **new flavor** into life.
 - a) If Christianity was an *Ice Cream flavor* what flavor would yours be? *Vanilla? Rocky Road?* (B/J hazed & confused, Phish food, coffee coffee buzz buzz, save our swirled)
- C. He is looking for those with **salty character** who will help Him influence this decaying world.
- D. His point is to show that disciples who *fail to live a kingdom lifestyle* are akin to something **tasteless** or **devoid of light** - *undesirable and of no value*.
- E. Slide12,13 Salt a.k.a. Sodium Chloride - Sodium is an extremely active element found naturally only in **combined form**; it always **links** itself to another element.
 1. **Chlorine** on the other hand, is the poisonous gas that gives *bleach* its offensive odor. When **sodium** and **chlorine** are combined, the result is **sodium chloride** - common **table salt** - the substance we use to **preserve meat** and **bring out its flavor**.
 - a) In forming the bond, sodium becomes a positively charged ion, by **giving up** its valence electron to chlorine, which then becomes a negatively charged ion.
 - b) For **Sodium** to become **Sodium-Chloride** it must give part of itself up.

V. Slide14 OUR WORLD IS DECAYING

- A. The world is **decaying** & is in **darkness** so God sends us into the world as **salt & light**.
 1. You & I are the antidote for its corruption.
- B. **History** is **not** an account of **Evolution**, w/man climbing *higher & higher*...It is a sad tale of **Devolution**, w/man falling *lower*.
- C. When things decay, they fall apart.
 1. When a living creature dies, it can no longer support its cell structure, **so** the body begins to decompose - *it falls apart*.
 2. We are seeing **Society** fall apart: **Marriages, Families, Law & Order**. The **Basic Institutions of society** are on *the Extinction list*.
 - a) Slide15a We **don't own** culture, and we **don't rule** it. We **serve** it...with brokenhearted joy and longsuffering mercy, for the good of man **and** the glory of Jesus Christ.

b) Being **Christian** in present day *American culture* **does not** end our **influence**; **but** it should take the *swagger* strut/stride out of it.

(1) We shouldn't get **cranky** that our country has been taken away. We shouldn't **whine** about the triumphs of evil. We shouldn't get **hardened** with anger. We understand. This is not new. This was the way it was in the beginning: *Antioch, Corinth, Athens, Rome*. The Empire was not just **degenerate**, it was **deadly**. For 3 explosive centuries Christians paid for their *Christ-exalting joy* with **blood**. Many still do. More will, even as we read *last week*. [It was time for **influence**...as it is **now**]

D. Slide15b *Christian*, we need to **be** a *preserving influence* in a *decaying world*.

VI. Slide16 DEALING WITH DECAY

A. The fact the world is Decaying should **not** encourage the Christian to **isolate** & **insulate** himself, **nor** to stand on the sidelines & wait for the great collapse.

1. Look at this Contrast - **Jonah** *sat outside the city* & hoped that judgment would fall, **whereas** **Jesus** *looked upon the city* & wept over it because judgment was inevitable.
2. Sometimes we as Christians not only hate **Sin**, **but** we seem to hate **Sinners**.
3. Joseph in Egypt & Daniel in Babylon **both** acted as *Divine Salt* in the midst of a corrupt society, & God used them.

B. If the world is as corrupt as it is w/Christians present in it, what will civilization be like when the Christians are gone?

1. **Ex:** Remember Sodom & Gomorrah when the last bel.'s were taken out?
2. One day God will judge this present world system, **but** He must call His own out of it before that judgment can fall.

C. **Meanwhile** - our responsibility is to exert all the power we can to **prevent decay**, & to **win people to Christ**.

VII. Slide17 SALT SEASONS/FLAVORS WHATEVER IT TOUCHES

- A. I love salt on my **steak**, when I put it down, I don't say *"That was great salt."* No, I say, *"That was great steak."* Why? Because the job of the salt is **not** to make you think how great the **salt** is, **but** how great the thing is with which it **has come in contact with**.
1. (msg) *Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be **salt-seasoning** that brings out the **God-flavors** of this earth.*
- B. Salt is **different** than the food you put it on. **Thus**, if salt became just like the food, it *wouldn't be* useful or used.
1. If we as Christians become **just like the world**, **and** loose our **positive influence**, we'll loose our **usefulness**.
 - a) The world is a better place because of the presence of Christians, whether the world admits it or not. [spiritually/point way to salv. & Physically: hospitals & schools, generosity]
- C. **Slide18** 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. (pic: bad salt)
1. **Back in Jesus' day** they didn't have the technology we have to **refine salt**, so it doesn't lose its taste.
 2. In fact it was difficult for them to tell the difference between the **salt** and the **sand** on the shores of the sea. What they called **salt** was really a **mixture** of **sand** and **salt** - sometimes more **salt** than **sand**.
 3. **Slide19** When it was more sand than salt, it had **lost its flavor** and therefore wasn't good for anything but to be **thrown out**.
 - a) Likewise if we, as believers become **self-centered** & start becoming **no different from the world**. We're mixing **His love salt** **with** our sand of selfishness.
- D. **This world lives** in **spiritual dehydration**. So **we** are to create **a thirst** for them to know... who God is.

VIII.Slide20 **SALT MAKES PEOPLE THIRSTY**

- A. Its been said, *You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. Actually you can if you rub his tongue w/salt.*
1. **How do we** create **a thirst** for them to know...*who God is!*

- B. If we are the *salt of the earth* than people will see in us what they are seeking for themselves & will want to take hold of it.
1. The Pharisees **repelled** the publicans & sinners, **Jesus attracted** them.
 - a) Jesus made them *Thirsty* for His *very own private water supply*.
 2. The more **we** are like **Him**, the more sinners will be **attracted** by our **life & witness** as we are *the salt of the earth*.
- C. ***Each one of us*** believers **individually** are **God's Salt** to a **Thirsty world**.
- D. **Slide21** Col.4:6 *Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*
1. I take this to mean that what we say about **Christ** and about **the Christian life** should be made *as appetizing as possible*. When food is not salted, its taste is bland. People don't want to eat it. It's unappetizing. Our speech is not supposed to be like that.
 2. How can you develop the ability to speak about Christ so that there is an **appetizing flavor** to it? How do you learn to talk about Christ in a way that **makes people's mouth water**? I think the answer is simply remind yourself daily **why** the gospel tastes good to you. **Why** do you enjoy Christ.
 - a) Prepare to be an advertisement for the satisfying taste of Jesus by enjoying him yourself. **Every day** we should go to the Bible and look for reasons why knowing Christ is the greatest thing in the world. *It's making our hearts happy in him.*
- E. **Slide22** The *salt of the earth* does not mock rotting meat. Where it can, it **saves and seasons**. And where it *can't*, it **weeps**. And the **light** of the world does not withdraw, saying *good riddance* to godless darkness. It labors to **illuminate...just not dominate**.
- F. I just hope you don't take this sermon **with a grain of salt...but** take it with all seriousness. **May each of us in our character...be found worth our salt.**