I. Slide1 Announce:
   A. Slide2 Christmas Eve Services: 3, 7, 9 pm. 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 **covenance 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.

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**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 lose 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. Slide 18 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. Slide 19 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. Slide 20 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.