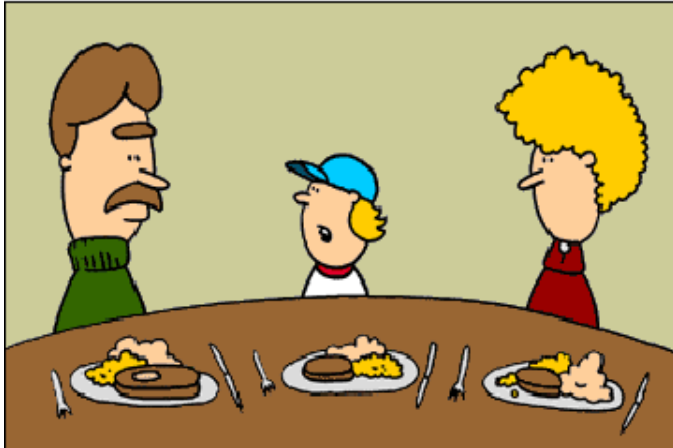


## PASS ME

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Thanks to Atrevete

06-21-2001

I KEEP SAYING PLEASE PASS "ME"  
BECAUSE IN SUNDAY SCHOOL WE LEARNED  
THAT WE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH

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We hear the words of Jesus in Mark 9:50, *"Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."* You also may be able to recite by heart the words of St. Paul in Colossians 4:6, *"Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person."* But would you ever be caught saying, **"Pass Me"**? You are the salt of the earth after all. Either we don't believe that salt really makes a difference (which we all do - especially when the doctor puts you on a sodium-free diet) or we don't know how to apply it to our daily lives as witnesses of Jesus.

Once at a meeting, some young people were discussing the words of Jesus, *"Have salt in yourselves."* They then "googled" the various uses of salt and its value in our modern world compared to ancient times. Then one girl simply said: "Salt makes you thirsty." They all got quiet and thought for a moment. Suddenly they all blurted out in unison, "Have we ever made our world thirsty for Jesus just by being around us?" What about you? **Read this article** as encouragement to BE who you are and remember what is in YOU. To the world you might be just one person, but to that one person, you might be the world. Your life, salted and fired, will bring out the best in others making them thirsty for the things of God.

An ancient king once asked his three daughters how much they loved him. One daughter said she loved him more than all the gold in the world. Another said she loved him more than all the diamonds in the world. The youngest daughter said she loved him more than salt. The king was not pleased with that answer. But the cook overheard the conversation, so the next day he prepared a good meal for the king but left out the salt. The food was so insipid and blah that the king couldn't eat it. Suddenly, he understood what his daughter meant. He understood the tremendous value of salt.

In the ancient world salt was a valuable and scarce commodity. It was used as currency in some countries even into modern times. During an invasion of Ethiopia, in the late 19th century, Italian soldiers found blocks of salt stored in bank vaults along with other familiar forms of currency. Jesus was paying His disciples a compliment and revealing their value as witnesses for the Kingdom when He called them salt.

## Has our witness of Jesus become blah - like stew without salt?

A woman named Marge wrote columnist Ann Landers with a complaint. In her letter, she said, "I'm 44, husband same age (swell guy). We get along O.K.—no drinking, no gambling, no skirt chasing. He has a good job, and our home is paid for. Our children are healthy and normal. They do well in school and the three older ones (teenagers) have never caused us any trouble." "So, why am I writing to you for help?" she asks. "Because my life is blah. Something is missing. It's like stew without salt. I can't find the salt. Please help."

Could it be that the world around us is finally realizing "something is missing" from their lives? Their lives are "blah". That doesn't mean there isn't a great deal going on. Life is more hectic than ever. COVID outbreaks, hurricanes, fires, earthquakes, violence, protests for and against everything under the sun, polarizing politics, injustice, hatred, to vaccinate or not vaccinate, cancel culture, revisionist history, unemployment while everyone seems to be hiring - yes, it's anything but boring. But is it like a large plop of stew on our plate without salt? You bet something is missing - and it's our Christian witness of Jesus. Our seasoned speech that makes a difference in every encounter is missing.

That's a sobering thought, isn't it? Our Lord would have us BE salt in this world. A preservative against the corruption of sin that is decaying and rotting the world all around us. To BE truth in a world of lies. To BE life in a world of death. To BE light in a world of darkness. To BE kindness in a world of cruelty. To BE merciful in a world of selfishness. To BE love in a world of indifference and hate. And so as Christians, we are not to be the same as the world, *but different*.

But are we? In how we think, in how we act, in how we speak, in what we desire? In all these things and in all these ways, are we preserving the world, or is the world corrupting us? Perhaps, like the people of Israel, our grumbling and complaining are signs that all is not right with us. Perhaps we are jealous for the wrong things and do not see the seriousness of our lack of contentment and the sins that it brings with it. And so we look back to Egypt with longing eyes, thinking that God's ways are not so good, are too hard, and that the world is offering something better.

But our Creator knows the devastation of sin. All sin. The sin we so often don't think twice about, or consider not so bad, or even think to be harmless. We are wrong. It is better, Jesus says, to remove the parts of our bodies that cause us to sin than to let those sins remain and continue. It would be better to have a great millstone hung around your neck and you be cast into the sea. We shudder at such thoughts, but Jesus says these things are better than the alternative. Better than being condemned for your sin and spending eternity apart from God, where those body parts you saved here only serve as food for the worm that does not die and the fire that is not quenched there.

Therefore, these words of Jesus should open our eyes today - not to despair, but to our need, and to the One who came to meet all our needs. This Jesus has called His followers, He has called YOU - SALT. You are precious to Him and valuable. Your life has significance as salt.

### **God's Word and history have a great deal to say about salt.**

The Hebrew people harvested salt by pouring sea water into pits and letting the water evaporate until only the salt was left. They used the mineral for seasoning and as a preservative. Salt was used to disinfect wounds and provide healing. Salt was used in worship and included in the temple offerings. (See Leviticus 2:13). Salt was cast on the burnt offerings and part of the incense. Salt was used to ratify covenants (Numbers 18:19, 2 Chronicles 13:5). Newborn babies were rubbed in salt to promote good health (Ezekiel 16:4). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls His followers "salt and light" exhorting them to live lives that make a difference where they are placed. Salt was used for purification - something we all need in the presence of God.

History has plenty to say about salt. For the Romans, salt was used for trade and salaries were paid to the soldiers in salt. Wars were fought between countries over the possession of salt. In our Nation's civil war, battles were fought and lives lost over salt. Salt has been used for currency. Still today, salt has numerous uses such as dye in clothing, in plastics and leather. Salt is used for stain removal. It removes rust from household appliances and bicycles. Salt eliminates odors from hands, cutting boards and even garbage disposals. Gargling with warm salt water can alleviate sore throats. Some soak their feet in warm salt water after a long day. In our own bodies, without the right amount of salt, muscles won't contract, blood won't circulate, food won't digest and the heart won't beat. Our bodies are meant to have about 4 oz. of salt.

### **Jesus, as Creator, taught about the value of salt to the world He created and loves.**

When Jesus said, "Have salt within yourselves" who would know better? He made us. Of all the valuable uses for salt, God used it as a symbol of a covenant that cannot be broken. In His Word, salt was a visible sign of God's Word and Spirit in His covenant with His people. God's covenant was His answer to preserve us from getting rotten with sin. Jesus shares with us some serious words concerning SIN. We rarely hear the word "sinful" anymore except to describe a really good dessert. But Jesus addresses the very sin for which He was heading to the Cross to remove and deliver us from the condemnation that the sin deserves. Sinners He loved. Sin He despised. There are some things about sin that Jesus wanted to say to us without equivocation: If you are in the presence of evil, get out of there. If you're being tempted, flee. That which causes you to sin, that which separates you from your brothers and sisters, that which prevents or breaks or interferes with this holy relationship begun in Christ is better cut off, cut out, cut away.

We must confess that we have not always lived and served as salt that brings out the best in others or causes others to have a thirst for the very same Word of God that blesses our lives. In fact, our words, thoughts, and deeds may cause others to sin or feel no sense of urgency to deal with sin. We may lead some to feel that reconciliation isn't important as we harbor an unwillingness to forgive. We may lead little children away from faith by the priorities we teach with our actions.

Living as salt demands a changed lifestyle in which relationships are more important than success, people are more important than power – a lifestyle centered in Christ is the number one priority! As baptized children of God, we are called to live as the people that Christ lived, died and rose for! Change is possible - but only through Christ. Hate sin, love the sinner with forgiveness and peace. This is not toleration of the world - **it is the changing of the world - one passing of the salt at a time.** God has placed us, as redeemed and forgiven children, in the world as salt - seasoned to serve! Our distasteful world needs salt.

**We live in a world that has not only lost its saltiness but is downright distasteful.**

Run through a list in your mind of the newest television shows set to begin this next week. They are more distasteful than ever. Many of the shows include in their trailers a toleration of homosexuality, infidelity and murder. The news highlighted young women testifying before Congress the failure of our FBI to respond to their cries for help. They asked, "How much is a young girl worth?" The world is torn over the question "how much is a single life worth" as witnessed by the protests over the Texas law forbidding abortion after six weeks.

Jesus asks, *"If the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again?"* He also gives us the answer - believers / witnesses have the salt within themselves that is living proof that the distasteful can be made salty again. We have the grace of God and the peace that passes all human understanding. God has placed us as His witnesses, His redeemed and forgiven children, in His world as SALT. And salt is exactly what our world needs. It needs to witness the difference salt makes.

You may be saying, "But for many of us, salt is not good." Many are forced to look for sodium-free foods and seasonings. So has Jesus lost His object lesson? Absolutely NOT. The truth has not changed, without salt the body (that means the Body of Christ as well) does not work properly. Whether you are on a sodium-free diet or you pour half the shaker on your sweet corn - the right amount is essential for one's daily life. So what's the right amount? Living lives as witnesses that make those around us thirsty.

Jesus doesn't want to leave even one part of our lives empty or blah so that sin can infest the rest of it. Everyone will be salted with fire. With the fire of God's Word to serve as salt, the Holy Spirit brings out the unique flavor in each believer as His children so He can preserve the world He loves with His saving grace. And God won't hesitate to use fire and brimstone

language to make this truth clear. This message is simply: **Desire God's salt**. As a body of believers and witnesses, we are called, equipped and empowered to confess our sin, hear God's Word of saving grace and live in God's preserving purity and righteousness. The only cure for what ails the world - sin, burdens, cancer, sickness, brokenness – is the salt of the Word and Spirit.

### **God has a bountiful harvest in mind when He calls you His salt.**

As a believer, you have God's salt within you. It has changed you from being dead in sin to alive in Christ. You are seasoned with grace and peace that comes from God Himself. Can we live in such a way that this witness can make others thirsty for the blessings of God? God knows we can because we are HIS salt accompanied by HIS Spirit. Have you ever heard it said of an athlete, "They make everyone around them a better player"? **The same is true of YOU.** Your witness of Jesus makes a difference for everyone around you.

This was true of Telemachus. Who was Telemachus? He was a monk who lived in the 5th century. He felt God saying to him, "Go to Rome." So he put all his possessions in a sack and set out for Rome. When he arrived in the city, people were swarming in the streets. He asked why all the excitement and was told that this was the day that the gladiators would be fighting in the coliseum, the day of the games, the circus. He thought to himself, "Four centuries after Christ and they are still killing each other for enjoyment?" He ran to the coliseum and heard the gladiators saying, "Hail to Caesar, we die for Caesar" and he thought, "This isn't right." He jumped over the railing and went out into the middle of the competition, got between two gladiators, and tried to stop them. The crowd became enraged and stoned the peacemaker to death. When the Emperor of Rome, Honorius, heard about the monk he declared him a Christian martyr and put an end to the games. **One person** – living as the salt of the earth – put an end to the gladiator games for good in Rome.

Jesus said, "Have salt in yourselves - be at peace with each other." And that is who you are. For though you fail, your Savior never fails. God is equipping and using you as His salt in this world, in ways that you know, and in ways that you may not even know or realize. He is using you to make the world thirsty for the things of God by being in the presence of Christ who lives in you.

While this message seems simple enough, it is never easy. But know this: you are always a witness of Jesus whether you intentionally spread the Gospel, or you just go about your day-to-day activities. Therefore, you can never have enough salt as it refers to Jesus and His Spirit. And that same truth is true for your neighbors, co-workers, fellow church members and every person we encounter in our day-to-day life. **Our prayer as witnesses of Jesus is: Lord, enable, equip and empower me to live my life in such a way that they will say: PASS ME!**

The reason your English District Evangelization Team exists is to BE SALT to you to encourage you to BE SALT. We don't present this because we never fail - but because we do fail (**Law**). We need God's salt – and so does the world around us. God makes that which was broken, distasteful, and worthy of the trash heap SALTY AGAIN (**Gospel**). God is looking forward to the harvest from His seasoned sinner/saints sharing this Gospel. Is this your prayer, too? Let the Evangelization Team know how we can help you be a seasoned witness of Jesus. Reach out to us at the email [evangelizationteam@englishdistrict.org](mailto:evangelizationteam@englishdistrict.org) We are willing to help you with a prayer, a resource or just good fellowship as we live our lives as God's salt. May God bless your witness this week. Who knows who might say, "Pass Sandy, Pass Bob, Pass (your name). I need the salt they have within them." Boy, I'm thirsty. Aren't you?!!

In Christ Alone,  
Pastor John Diener  
Galatians 2:20