

# RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP

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Matt. 5: 13 – “*You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything ...*”

## CALLED TO BE SALT

We're all familiar with the Scripture: “*You are the salt of the earth.*” But how often have we thought about what Jesus meant by that? How does salt play into radical discipleship? Very simply, a radical disciple who is not salty is not a radical disciple at all.

Salt is a seasoning. It is also used in the curing process. You have been called to season the peoples of the earth. In other words, you have been called to make them more pleasing to God; to encourage them in the Lord; and if necessary, like the medics during wartime, to carry them out of danger. You have also been called to be a healing agent, a curing agent, one who has the words of life that can bring healing to the disease of sin. Please note, you are not called to be a healer, but a healing agent. As you yield to God, as you wait on Him, He will give you the supplies necessary for that to which He has called you. You then need only to obey, to carry out those duties, as He sends you forth, or as He brings others across your path. And your

saltiness will cause you to become a difference maker.

You are the salt of the earth. **Wherever you find yourself, whatever your position in life, you have a responsibility to others on earth.** That responsibility is to “*let your light so shine that others will see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.*” This is why it is so important for you to be yielded to the Lord. We all know how difficult it is to put on a good face all day, every day. We can't. Why? Because we try to do it in our own strength. This is why we yield to the Lord. As we do, as we allow God to be the all in all in us, the self begins to lose its hold on us. The Holy Spirit begins to take control of our lives. The spiritual part of us, then, is more in control and has precedence in our decision-making.

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**The salt is the spiritual part of us, that part of us that is yielded to God, that is full of the Holy Spirit of God.**

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God wants us to be the salt of the earth. Now, having begun yielding to God, we can see that it is possible. We

can become salt spreaders. Why? Because we no longer attempt to do things in our own strength. God's strength is sufficient to keep us salty. Sure, there will be times when we blow it; there will be times when we forget that we are salt and bypass opportunities that God has placed before us. That's why we continue to come to Him daily, repenting and yielding to Him. We get those things taken care of, by His grace, and then power on. Every day, God heals us a little more.

But the bottom line is: our responsibility is to be salt to the earth. The whole earth. Wherever we happen to be. The salt is the spiritual part of us, that part of us that is yielded to God, that part of us that is full of the Holy Spirit of God. **God will do the work through us. The salt will spill where it is supposed to spill.** We will be alert to the things that God wants us to do.

You need to walk through every day with your hand in your salt bag. Here in Maryland, during the winter, we often have a fair amount of snow, sleet and ice. And most of us keep a large bag of salt on the back porch or

inside the door of the office so that we can sprinkle it on the iced sidewalks and steps, to prevent others from slipping and being hurt. Likewise, you need to walk through the day with your hand in your salt bag, ready to sprinkle and carry out your responsibility according to the Scriptures. Only God knows who you may keep from slipping and hurting themselves.

## LOSING YOUR SALT

If, however, you lose your saltiness, you are in serious spiritual trouble. What, again, is your saltiness? Your saltiness is the make up of who you are, spiritually. God has prepared a game plan for each one of us. Within that game plan, He has provided us with the capability (our saltiness) to carry it out and to be victorious. If we forego that order, or if for any other reason we turn away from the Lord, or even live our Christian lives half-heartedly, then at that point in time in which we should have begun to move forward in God's plan, to obey His orders, we, instead, forfeit our saltiness.

Now, let's be clear about something. All of us, as Christians, have been called to be the salt of the earth. The problem for most of us is that until we realize that we must yield ourselves to the Lord and get our lives cleaned up so that we can be used by

Him, we aren't the salt of the earth. At least, we haven't acted like we were. But our ignorance doesn't exonerate us. God, in His graciousness, because of our stupidity, holds our saltiness for a long time, waiting for us to get our acts together. But if, at any time, we turn away from the Lord, and choose the world's ways over His, or simply choose to live a half-hearted Christianity, we are in danger of losing our saltiness completely.

The consequences are clear. We are good only to be trampled under by men. That's what the Scripture says. That's another way of saying: We have been given over to the world for it to do what it pleases with us. That's not a good place to be.

This saltiness is an all-encompassing attribute of God. It includes the ability to love under difficult circumstances; the ability to forgive when vengeance is what you would prefer; and the ministries of mercy, compassion and charity, especially when they are to be distributed to those who are difficult to love. Do we do that? God has spoken to you about your salt. The question is: have you responded properly? **You already have everything you need to be merciful, charitable, compassionate, etc. That is why you are salty.** Without salt, you could do none of these things.

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**He made us salty to love those who are difficult to love; those who will not return our love.**

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Do you have the ability to love under difficult circumstances? You most definitely do. You already love some people, generally those closest to you and the handful of dear friends that you have. Jesus said even the tax collectors and sinners did that. We all love those who also love us, those who are easy to love, and those who are closest to us. We don't need much salt to do that. That isn't why God made us salty. He made us salty to love those who are difficult to love; those who are beneath us (hopefully we'll eventually realized that no one is beneath us); and those who will not return our love. Easy? Hardly. But we're not being asked to do this in our own strength. As we continue to yield to the Lord, we must realize that God is cleaning us up for a reason. Yes, He wants to love us and to fellowship with us, and to enjoy us, but He also wants to use us. He made us salty for a reason. He did not make us salty in order to fellowship with Him. **He made us salty so that we could fellowship with others, others with whom we would normally not fellowship.**

God wants you to distribute your salt. Reach out to those

who are unloved, to those who will not return your love; do that and distribute your salt. Jesus said if you did it to the least of those, you did it also to Him. He also told those who refused to be salty that they would not enter the kingdom of Heaven. And remember, some of them said, "But Lord, we cast out devils in Your name, we preached in Your name." And Jesus said, "Depart from me. I never knew you."

The ministries of mercy, compassion and charity are generally gifts, granted by the Lord, to various individuals. But the truth is that God has called every one of us to be merciful and compassionate and charitable. We have been given enough salt with which to do so. As we continue to yield to Him, He will grant us opportunities to spread our salt. We will have opportunities to be merciful, compassionate and charitable. And we need to seek out opportunities, as well. The neighbor whose husband left her with three children – do you cook a meal for her occasionally, realizing that by the time she gets home from work, she's worn out? Of course, it is you, the wife, that needs to do that, not your husband.

That man who sits in Church and is always crying, have you stopped to think that he's going through something that might be terrifying to him? God has given you enough salt to

minister to him. Again, you, mister, need to go to him, not your wife. If you sit next to him, put your arm around his shoulder, and don't utter a sound, God will still be able to minister to Him mightily. Why? Because you have sprinkled salt!

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**When God gets hold of your wallet, the rest of you usually comes along without much argument.**

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When you hear about the family that is struggling financially because the husband lost his job and is having difficulty finding work, have you thought about making their mortgage payment this month? About taking them a couple bags of groceries? About taking their family out to dinner?

**The saltiness that God has provided you with includes the finances you have; and you only have them by His grace.** Don't you dare be stingy with them. They don't belong to you. They belong to God. Many have shared this philosophy before – that when God gets hold of your wallet, the rest of you usually comes along without much argument.

You are the salt of the earth. None of us want to lose our saltiness, and we have not been given the option, by God, to choose where we can sprinkle our salt. He didn't say, "You are the salt of your

immediate family." Nor did He say, "You are the salt of Hoboken, New Jersey, but nowhere else." He didn't say, "You are the salt within your own Church," and He didn't say, "You are the salt among those who are within your financial status."

He said, "You are the salt of the earth." The earth is a big place and it is all-encompassing. Let God be God. Let your salt sprinkle love where love is needed. Let your salt sprinkle forgiveness where forgiveness is needed. Let your salt sprinkle mercy, compassion and charity where they are needed.

## YOUR SALT BAG

The more you yield, the more God heals; and the more God heals, the saltier you become. You must still share your salt but not because you have become somebody, but rather because God sees a need, chooses to meet that need, and you happen to be the closest salt storehouse available for Him to use. But suppose you run out? It will never happen. You will never run out of salt.

Is it an enigma? Maybe. We have a calling, a responsibility, a challenge. Let's put it in perspective. We don't produce salt. It was part of our make-up when God created us. If He wrote our name in His book of life,

then He, not us, begins to add qualities to our salt depending on the needs we will at some point have to address.

We obey. We yield. He heals, He produces, adds, and changes our saltiness to meet His purposes. He works through us, accomplishing His purpose. We are the conduit, He is the electricity. It is vital that we understand – we have salt; we are salty; our saltiness must be used, throughout the earth, in order for us to be obedient to the Scriptures; but like everything else, we can do it in our own strength or we can yield to God and allow it to be done properly, with far, far greater results.

Remember Elijah and the widow of Zaraphath? Because she was willing to obey the Lord, through the prophet, her jar of oil never ran dry and her flask of flour never ran out. Likewise, you cannot disperse too much salt over the earth. Like a huge thunderstorm from Heaven, let it pour out in bucketfuls. The more you sprinkle, the more bottomless the bag becomes. When you pour out the salt of love, more love salt flows from God into your bag. When you pour out the salt of forgiveness, more forgiveness salt flows back into your bag. **You will never run out of salt. And your bag will never break.** It will be like the widow's jar of oil. Your salt will never lose its saltiness. It will

always have the curing ability, the healing ability, and the seasoning ability that is necessary for it to accomplish its purposes. It will always accomplish what God wants to accomplish through it. Remember, it is your salt, but it came from God. You are doing no more than being an obedient servant. The vaults of Heaven are overflowing with salt. God wants you to use yours up. He's got plenty left. **And one day in Heaven, flocks of saints will come to you and say, "Thanks for the salt."** Those will be among the most beautiful words you will have ever heard. Isn't God absolutely phenomenal?

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