

Prayer

"You are the salt of the earth."

Sprinkle us across our town, God, across our world, to bring the flavour of your Kingdom wherever we go.

"You are the light of the world."

Uncover the radiance that is within us, God, to shine the truth of your love wherever we go.

"Let your light shine before others"

that everyone we meet may see our lives of worship and glorify you, our Father in heaven. Amen.



Matthew 5:13-16

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

These days, salt gets a pretty bad rap: we're regularly told we need to cut down because a diet high in salt can raise our blood pressure and increase our risk of heart disease and stroke. On that basis, it sounds like pretty dangerous stuff! And yet, if we were to describe someone as 'salt of the earth' we usually mean they are a very good, honest and practical person. These two things seem to be in total contradiction! So when Jesus says that we not only should be, but **are** the salt of the earth, what does he mean?

In the ancient world, salt was an incredibly valuable commodity. For example, Roman soldiers were paid in salt, their monthly allowance was called 'salarium' ('sal' is the Latin word for salt) and that's where the word 'salary' comes from! Salt was (and is) used as a flavour enhancer, a preserver, and even a medicine. So when people around Jesus heard him telling them they were the 'salt of the earth,' they understood this to mean they were an incredibly precious and valuable commodity. This was similar to being described as 'the light of the world' – they were part of a poor community for whom lamp oil, and therefore the ability to bring light to dark places, was a precious resource (perhaps not too dissimilar to today?!)

So in these verses, Jesus is telling us that we are precious in his sight and precious resources in the kingdom of God. In how we choose to behave, think and speak, we can literally change both the flavour and temperature of this world for the better. Through us, the light of Christ can bring illumination and warmth to even the darkest places, that's like bringing hope to those who feel hopeless and through us, salt can bring flavour back to a life that seems dull and bland. So, just this once, make sure your daily diet is full of salt and your actions are filled with light...just don't tell your doctor I said that!

Rev'd Charlotte