

FAR ABOVE RUBIES:

Insights on living the Christian life – from a female perspective



Salt of the Earth

A story is told of a dietician who was speaking at a conference. *"The material we put into our stomachs is enough to have killed most of us sitting here years ago. Red meat is awful, soft drinks erode your stomach lining and Chinese food is loaded with MSG. Vegetables can be disastrous and you cannot begin to imagine the long-term harm caused by the germs in our drinking water. But there is one thing that is the most dangerous of all and we all have, or will, eat it. Can anyone here tell me what food it is that causes the most grief and suffering for years after eating it?"* she asked. A 75-year-old man in the front row stood up and shouted *"Wedding cake!"*

Seriously, though, there have been foods which have been branded as bad for your health, particularly when used excessively, and salt is one of them. The bottom line is, however, that we all need salt in our diet, as the sodium in it is vital for controlling the amount of water in the body amongst other things.

In Matthew 5:13 we read *"You are the salt of the earth: but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men."* This verse does not tell us what we will be or what we represent, but what we are! We **are** the salt of the earth and believe it or not the world needs us. So exactly what influence do we as Christians have in the world?

In ancient times salt was connected with **purity**. The Romans thought it was purest of all things whilst the Greeks thought it was divine! Salt was used for purifying as it helped keep putrefaction at bay. As Christians we should have a purifying effect on those around us. Our very presence as salt should help curtail lowering standards. It's only a minor thing but I remember when I was an AO, how some of my colleagues said how happy there were that I was going on holiday so that they could swear all they liked! On my return however, some said how happy they were glad to have me back again as the swear box was full to the brim and they were running out of money! As Christians we need to hold high the standards of Christ, not just in thought, but in our speech and conduct.

Because of its purity there is a measure of **preservation** provided in salt. There are some countries across Europe who still salt fish for this very reason. Salt keeps the food from going off and preserves it from corruption. In Proverbs 14:34 we read that *"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."* Day and daily

we see those who are working relentlessly to try to change our moral laws in one way or another. Even those who would call themselves Christians are deliberately going against the word of God. As salt we need to get into positions of influence. I thank God for the Christians in our government, in the media and in our schools, but we need more. Sadly today, too many Christians don't want to get involved, but will complain when Darwin's **theory** of evolution is being taught as fact in our schools. We cannot afford to sit back and do nothing, but need to stand up for what is right in order to help preserve our Christian heritage.

Salt is also known for its **healing** properties. One of the best known remedies for a sore throat is to gargle with salt. It can also be used to take the itch out of insect bites and as saline nose drops. Although these remedies are simple they are very effective. That is how we should be in our community and workplace. When people are sick or are in trouble are we there to "*pour in the oil and the wine*" (Luke 10:34) and to pray for them? That is also why we need to be approachable. It's amazing how some people who usually have no time for God will come to a Christian for prayer. As salt helps takes the itch out of bites, so we should have a soothing and calming effect on stressful situations. Doctors and nurses have a great knack of staying calm in most situations because they are trained to do so. When problems arise we need to ensure that we don't help fuel the situation but, by the help of the Holy Spirit, bring peace and healing into it.

One of the main purposes of salt is to add **flavour** to food. Now I am not a great salt lover and only use it in cooking, particularly when cooking potatoes, as they can be quite tasteless without it. Salt adds flavour to food whilst remaining inconspicuous. People would not normally say "this salt is lovely" but rather "this food is very tasty." Just as salt makes a difference to the taste of food so we should make a difference in our society. Those around us should be influenced by our presence as they see how, with the help of God, we cope with certain circumstances and radiate the love of Jesus. We must, however, be careful not to add too much salt. Have you ever salted the potatoes twice? We must add just the right amount. It's the same in our Christian walk. If we overdo it people will start avoiding us. We must be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and witness when He gives us opportunity. I know it can be very difficult in the workplace but I always prayed at the start of each day for the Lord to give me opportunities to witness, which He always did.

In Matthew 5:13 Jesus also gave us a warning "*but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.*" If salt has lost its taste there is no way to get it back again. We need to be careful to retain our saltiness. Secularism, intellectualism and materialism have all taken their toll on the church, so much so that the salt has become diluted and even non-existent in some places. Some believers have become ineffective in their society. The devil just loves sleeping Christians who pose no threat to him. We sometimes forget that we are in a battle and if we are to win the lost we must get our priorities right.

In his church Joel Osteen makes a statement about what the word of God says we are. A potted version which we affirm in our church states "This is my Bible, God's word to me. I am what it says I am, I have what it says I have and I can do what it says I can do." Jesus said "**You are the salt of the earth.**" Let's live up to it!