

Salt Substitutes

Ponder: Being the salt of the earth

Scripture: "You are the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13a, NKJV).

A human body my size contains a little less than two cups of salt. That seems like a lot, but salt is essential for human life!

Salt also enhances the flavor of foods and can be a preservative. People used to pack meat in salt to prevent decay. We still use salt to pickle cucumbers, beets, and okra.

Some people restrict their salt intake due to health issues. Manufacturers have devised numerous salt substitutes like "Mrs. Dash" and "No Salt."

Jesus told His disciples, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt becomes tasteless, how shall it be made salty again? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men" (Matthew 5:13).

In ancient times, refined salt wasn't available, so salt might have impurities. If water leached away the salt, all that would be left would be the impurities. Your salt would no longer be salty. You would throw the dirt and pebbles out; they would become part of the road where people walked.

As the salt of the earth, Jesus expects us to have a positive influence. Salt helps food to taste better, so we ought to help our world to be a better place by our good deeds, good example, and proclaiming God's word. Like salt, we ought to be a preservative. If only ten righteous people had lived in Sodom, God would have spared the entire city. What about our community, our state, our nation? We can be a preserving influence by behaving in ways that please and glorify the Lord.

But disciples of Jesus can lose their saltiness! If we do, we become worthless. We're not making our world better, nor are we exercising the preserving influence God intends.

How about using a salt substitute? Whenever we exchange our own preferences or opinions for the word of God, we stop being the salt of the earth and start being a salt substitute. It's folly to think we've found a way that's even better than what God has revealed. I don't know about substitutes for table salt, but I guarantee that the only way to be the salt of the earth is by faith and obedience to God and His word.

Song: "This Is My Task"

Prayer: Father, may we cherish Your word and never substitute our own preferences for it. In Jesus' name, Amen.