

## Savor

I guess we all realize that the first-century church left its first love, its distinctive quality or flavor. It's like salt that loses its savor, its distinctive quality. That's what savor is — distinction from the world. Christianity today is not distinct; it has no distinctive qualities that set it apart from the world.

Lk 14:26-33 speaks about the whole gospel, the full gospel, the gospel that has to be proclaimed in order for a person to truly follow our Master and give up his own life in the world (his own selfishness), and receive our Father's love. And what follows verse 33?

*Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its savor, how shall it be seasoned?*

Our Master said it right after talking about having to give up all your own possessions. If you truly believe, you'll do that; otherwise you'll hang on to things. Also, Mk 9:50 speaks about salt and savor. Salt is good. The downfall of the first communities was that they lost their faithfulness. Salt is faithfulness to retain that distinctive flavor. They became good for nothing, like Christianity today. It's worthless. It's like salt that has lost its savor, its distinctive quality.

Salt that loses its strength over time becomes useless. We have to understand this and be able to speak to others about it. We want to make sure that the salt doesn't lose its savor, its distinctive power, because we're responsible for others. Unsavory salt is good for nothing, but to be thrown out.

Rev 17:14 — Will He find faithfulness? It's only for the faithful that our Master will return — the called, chosen, and faithful. We have to be faithful to rule, faithful to Him as His co-workers. If a community loses its salt, the actual quality of the gospel, then it fills up with tares and becomes a tare field. When the first church left their first love, their lampstand was removed. They still preached, but it was filled up with tares. No one

received the Holy Spirit. They just became a religion, and then it was given over to the state.

Salt is an ingredient that gives savor, its distinctive qualities. Remember that. Once it loses its distinctive nature, it cannot be restored. It has to be thrown out. That particular community can't be restored. It goes on in the natural, just as happened in the first, second, and third centuries, and on down through the twentieth century. Then something new began to happen — a new culture. Salt preserves the culture of the true church, which is being reborn. The first-century edah had salt. The gospel was being proclaimed and people were receiving the Holy Spirit. They weren't just a religion.

So, salt gives savor, a distinct flavor. It's called *zest*, like people full of life, vigor, sharpness. Salt preserves food. It's a preservative. It places valuable minerals in food that's pure, seasoned with salt. A good word for it is *piquancy* — zesty, tasty, provocative (in a good way, provoking people to see and understand, stirring people up), inciting, stimulating, arousing, rousing one out of his personal refuge. That's how salt is.

When you see things going on in a community and no one does anything about it — peculiar behavior that destroys the edah — then something's gone wrong. The salt is no longer there if you allow people to live in the community and do their own thing, coming and going as they please, just sleeping and eating here, but not doing anything constructive. In old Israel, any visitor from the outside had to do exactly what everyone else did. Even parents who come and stay with us should come to the gatherings if they are able. They work alongside of us; they wash dishes or do this or that, as much as they can, rather than just consider it a vacation.

Salt drives out indifference. Consider what Mk 9:50 means, and why our Master talked about salt right after He said, "Unless a person gives up all his possessions, he cannot be My disciple. Salt is good, but if it loses its savor..." That's the gospel. You can lose your savor. Our rulership loses its power if we lose our distinctive quality, if the salt loses its savor. It becomes bland, good for nothing.

After the first church lost its salt, they couldn't be restored. Rev 3:4 — Our Master was appealing to them to see that they were losing their first love, that their salt was becoming tasteless, losing its vigor, its distinctive flavor, and they were losing their distinctive nature. Their nature was changing. We've always said that nature doesn't change, but somehow they mutated. The church died and took on a different nature.

This can be a catalyst for a freepaper. We are going to continually have papers like that up in the lounge area of our Yellow Deli, laying around for people so they can pick them up. Some will be led by angels, and they'll see that what we say is true. Then they'll start asking us questions. We don't necessarily have to pursue them, but if they come to us, then we'll tell them.

Rev 3:14-17 is what happens when the salt is gone. If there are no rulers, people do what is right in their own eyes (Jdg 21:25). So people come and go as they please. We had to deal with that in the beginning. If people wouldn't get up in the morning, we got them up. If people wouldn't make their bed, they couldn't live there. They had to do what we did, because we knew that otherwise we'd be destroyed very quickly.

So many people were backpacking around. They'd said, "Praise the Lord, and pass the potatoes!" They wouldn't want to work with us. People were sending us all kinds of derelicts. We'd let them come, but they had to work. If they wouldn't work, then they couldn't live here. Then the message got out, "Don't go there, because they make you work! It's not just a place where you can get a free meal." If word got out that all you had to do was go to the Vine House to get a free meal and sit around the pot-belly stove all day, then we would have been destroyed. Sometimes we had to pick people up out of bed and take them outside and tell them to come back when they were interested in hearing what we had to say. If not, we would have been taken over, for sure.

**Chets Barur** — What makes us distinct isn't that we make bio-diesel or that we do organic farming, or that we have cafes. What makes us distinct is the salt we have, the gospel that set us free. If we lose that saltiness of

daily giving up everything and not living for ourselves, then we'll just become another religion, a place that doesn't have any distinction.

We talk about love and care and all those things, which are totally wonderful, but it doesn't mean that we don't have salt. Sometimes love is telling people, "You need to work; you're just being selfish." There's got to be a balance there. It takes being filled with the Holy Spirit.

We've always said that we have to run people off with the gospel. Let them be repelled by the gospel if they are not drawn by it. That's how it has to be. The gospel has got to be real and true. I confronted J. [*a man staying with us*] with his selfishness. What's he going to do with himself for the rest of his life? Where is he going to spend eternity? Some people sit with him and talk about everything in the world. They don't really get to the point and the terms of peace.

The first church's downfall was when the salt lost its savor, its distinctive qualities. We are to restore that nature. We have to have the same nature as the first edah, if we have the Holy Spirit. That's the nature we've all received, the nature that calls us to be exactly like the first-century church. We'll be tested in every way.

**Havah shel Hakam** — When you said the word *zest*, I thought about a lemon. When you take a little of the peel, the essence of the lemon comes out. It's the *zest* of the lemon. But, if you take an old, shriveled lemon and you try to peel it, there's no zest in it. You don't get that zesty spray of the lemon. With a fresh lemon, you just put a teaspoon in a whole recipe and that zest will flavor the whole thing. It's unmistakable.

That's very good. Zest is savor. If salt loses its savor, there's nothing left but natural men. So, whoever comes in the doors here, we've got to have certain standards, but say it in love and see if we can win the person. They can't just come and go as they please. They have to live and work with us, unless there's a judgment regarding a particular case.

**Chets Barur** — It takes the wisdom of our Father. When the economy collapses, we're going to be bombarded with people. And if we don't have salt in us, we'll be destroyed. I'm thankful our Father is showing us these things so that we won't become inundated with people who aren't sincere. Working together is part of the requirements of the gospel. We're thankful

that we're saved from death, so we want to deny ourselves every day. And if people don't want to do that, then they shouldn't come.

Yônêq — If you don't work, you don't eat (2 Ths 3:10).

**Philip** — I was thinking about the quality of salt as a preservative. I was thinking about all the movements and causes throughout history that start off with seemingly good intentions. Yesterday, we were talking about the food industry and how it's been degraded. A lot of companies started off with really high standards, but the love of money crept in and they started lowering their standards so that they could make more money. And the music industry is the same way. Someone has a lot of talent, but then they get consumed with love of fame and fortune. That's the nature of the realm of death.

It's so good what our Master said about salt. That salt preserves us. That's why the first church, in the beginning, didn't get eaten away like every other good cause. But they did when they lost their saltiness. It's a good lesson for us because we can still lose our saltiness.

We were born and raised eating bad salt. Now we have good salt. Salt is good for you. It does the same for our natural bodies as it does for the Body of Messiah.

**Eldad** — When Yônêq was talking about the distinctive quality of salt I was thinking about how the bride of our Master Yahshua is distinct from every other people. Christianity isn't really distinct anymore. There are Christian rock bands, but if you put three bands up on stage and one is Christian and two are not, there's nothing different. But if you put us on the stage and three others, we really stand out. I'm thankful for our distinct life. The distinctive qualities of our life we have to continually cultivate, because there are always little things that try to creep in. If unguarded, we will start looking like the world in a lot of ways.

**Sekel shel Nun** — One time in Australia, ha-êmeq told me that when we present the gospel we need to incorporate into it things of our life. For example, we had a problem there with women coming in who were more career-minded. They didn't like working in the kitchen or taking care of children. She said that should be incorporated in our gospel to the women, that this is the reality of what you're going to be doing in the Community when you're saved. It helps them know that's what's expected of them, that when they're a disciple they're going to have to lay down their lives. Whatever expectation they had, it's going to be our Father's way and not their way. It helped me a lot to know how to deal with people when they

had certain inclinations that weren't what the Community stood for. That was another aspect of the salt; that when we present the gospel that we understand where people are coming from and really address things with them and make it very clear from the very beginning what they're supposed to do.

**Hakam** — I was thinking about what Mk 9:49 says, "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt." The seasoning is what makes us distinct. We have a certain seasoning that goes into us, and there has to be fire in order for that seasoning to go in. When you cook, what you cook is hot. You put fire, salt, and seasoning, and it goes into whatever you're cooking. So when people eat it, it has a certain flavor.

A disciple of Yahshua is able to respond to fire. He doesn't just burn up when fire comes. He takes the heat and allows the salt to go in. That's what changes us. If we don't have standards then there's no fire or salt and you never know whether that person is doing all right. We always said in the beginning that the gospel either repels or draws. A person is either able to be seasoned or not.

There are things going on that reveal a lack of salt. For instance, someone wants a cell phone, so he says, "Nun's got one, so how come I can't have one?" Maybe Nun has a certain ministry. It's not just to call his mother or something of that nature. We have to deal with this rebellion. We can't allow rebellion to come in. Or someone keeps walking off the job and going home. We have to have a qahal with him. He can't continue in this. Or someone says, "How come you have a car and I don't have one?" Nobody has anything unless it's given to him. No one should have a computer unless he has a certain ministry in the Community for which he *needs* a computer. Many have fallen away on computers.

**ha-êmeq** — We're not just going to go on after he says, "Where's the salt?" and say, "Okay, well, we'll get that for you later. We'll pray about it. We're really busy right now. But we'll get the salt, don't worry." We just can't do that. When you need the salt, you need it *right now*. We can't just put it off.

*Can flavorless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg? My soul refuses to touch them; they are as loathsome food to me. (Job 6:6-7)*

That's wonderful. Let's be the salt of the earth, today.