

Unsalty Salty

Mark 9:50
Charlie Brackett

Jesus raised the question, "...if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it?" The answer with literal, physical salt is obvious. You don't. Jesus, of course, spoke of His disciples as the salt of the earth. And the answer in the spiritual sense is the same. You don't. If, as a follower of the Lord, you lose your saltiness, you cannot be restored to useful service again. What a horrible prospect! How can that be?!

In view of our studies in the last few messages, the answer should be obvious: by losing the self-sacrificing spirit of our Lord. Notice, first, that you cannot lose what you have never had. Jesus is speaking of faithful Christians. They have been fruitful laborers in His vineyard. They have been the kind of salt He spoke of in Matthew 5:13, useful as preservatives of the world. In other words, they have been soul savers.

Alright, they *have* been salt, but how do they lose that essential saltiness? Consider with me how easily it can happen. A disciple of Christ becomes apathetic about the Lord's word. By not responding to His commands promptly, the disciple sears his conscience (1 Timothy 4:1,2). Early on, at the very thought of his disobedience, a little voice inside chides him. He has a guilty conscience. But he ignores it, and by not heeding it, he sears his conscience hardening it against his disobedience. In time, the voice grows quieter. He's heard it before, and each time it speaks, it has less impact. Finally, his conscience is so seared, it ceases to function, it ceases to provide any warning to him.

As the individual continues in disobedience, his heart is hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13). It becomes easier to sin and more difficult to repent. In time, it becomes impossible to repent. Listen to Hebrews 6:4-6. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame." Can you imagine a more horrible condition to be in? I can't, except for hell itself. Unable to repent. Able to realize one's sin, to know of God's wrath to come, and to understand what to do to make things right with God, yet not be able to respond. That's being unable to repent. Lord help us never reach that point!

When Jesus spoke of our being salt, He warned us of this horrible end. He said, "...if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it?" When salt is no longer salty, its saltiness cannot be restored. There is nothing with which to salt salt. What kind of salt will we be?