



Salt of the Earth
Matthew 5:13

“Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.” Mark 9:50

Some jobs in life are hateful and yet necessary. I remember one of those from my teenage years. They were depression days, and there was no such thing as a refrigerator. If meat was to be kept, it had to be salted heavily. Every fall I knew that one day I would come home from school in the afternoon and find a gutted pig lying on the back porch. I knew there would be no playing ball that afternoon. My job was to rub salt into the pieces of that pork as my mother cut them up. The only thing that brightened that unpleasant task was imagining the smell of bacon frying for breakfast or the taste of ham when company came.

One day we were having some very special company for supper, and so mother took me out to the smoke-house and pointed to the largest ham hanging from the rafters. I pulled it down, opened the sack and laid the beautiful ham out for my mother to cut. The big butcher knife penetrated the best portion of that ham, and I waited with anticipation to see the meat. I had two simultaneous and shocking experiences. One was the frown on my mother’s face and the other was the most offensive smell I have ever smelled. The ham was full of maggots.

My mother looked at me with dismay and said, “Son, not enough salt.”

I never hear Jesus’ words “You are the salt of the earth,” without remembering that ham. We live in a day in which our society is loaded with corruption. The problem is not that evil is so powerful; in fact, evil only works in the absence of that which is holy. Where the Holy One reigns, evil can no more exist than maggots can live in salt. This is the reason we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. Then we ourselves can find freedom from the corruption that surrounds us. Even more importantly, the Spirit in us can be a check on the evil that surrounds us.

Dennis Kinlaw, *This Day with the Master*, December 14 (Zondervan, 2003).