

### Call to Worship

Bring praise and thanksgiving to God, our Creator.

**Glory and hosanna. Praise be to God.**

Bring joys and concerns to God, our Savior.

**Great is God's steadfast love and faithfulness. Thanks be to God.**

Bring open minds and hearts to God, our Guide.

**Your Spirit goes before us. Thanks be to God.**

### Prayer of Invocation

**God of creation, your stars keep their appointed rounds and are a reminder that you are constant, unchanging love. You are the landmark by which we navigate the trackless part of our journey. You are the guide next to whose side we cannot go wrong. Yet we have wandered off on our own even going so far as to worship idols who give us nothing and demand everything. Yet if we lift our eyes to you we know that you once more set us on the right course. Hear our words, heal us. Amen.**

### The Word

Matthew 5:13-16 Mark 9:49-50

"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its saltiness, how will it become salty again? **It's good for nothing except to be thrown away and trampled under people's feet.**

You are the light of the world. A city on top of a hill can't be hidden. **Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on top of a lampstand, and it shines on all who are in the house.**

In the same way, let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Father who is in heaven. **Everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt loses its saltiness, how will it become salty again? Maintain salt among yourselves and keep peace with each other."**

### Living the Word

And Jesus said: "For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourself, and be at peace with one another."

### Ten of the Vital Functions of Salt in the Body

- Salt is most effective in stabilizing irregular heartbeats and, Contrary to the misconception that it causes high blood pressure, it is actually essential for the regulation of blood pressure - in conjunction with water at the correct portions.
- Salt is vital for balancing the sugar levels in the blood, especially needed by diabetics.
- Salt is vital to generate of hydroelectric energy in the cells of the body; vital to the nerve cells' communication and information processing to make the brain cells work, from the moment of conception to death.
- Salt is essential for the prevention of muscle cramps.
- Salt is absolutely vital to making the structure of bones firm. Salt is vital for sleep regulation. It is a natural hypnotic.
- Salt on the tongue will stop persistent dry coughs.
- Salt is vital for reducing a double chin. When the body is short of salt, it means the body really is short of water. The salivary glands sense the salt shortage and are obliged to produce more saliva to lubricate the act of chewing and swallowing and also to supply the stomach with water that it needs for breaking down foods. Circulation to the salivary glands increases and the blood vessels become "leaky" in order to supply the glands with water to manufacture saliva. The "leakiness" spills beyond the area of the glands themselves, causing increased bulk under the skin of the chin, the cheeks and into the neck.

In Jesus' day salt was used to preserve food especially fish, to make life more colorful as they used to dye salt bright colors, and used as money: Salt is one of the world's oldest forms of payment. In fact, the word salary derives from the Latin "salarium," which was the money paid to Roman soldiers to buy salt. The Roman soldiers were paid in salt and could then exchange it for what they needed anywhere in the Roman kingdom.

It was the main form of currency in the Sahara Desert during the Middle Ages, and was used extensively throughout East Africa. Typically, one would lick a salt block to make sure it was real and break off pieces to make change.

To be worth one's salt in those days meant you earned your pay. Today to earn your weight in salt wouldn't be worth much, as salt is so much easier to obtain and inexpensive to buy. Remember this? "When it rains it pours" (Morton salt).

So what do I mean by some salty folks? Do you recall the story of Lot's Wife in Genesis 19? If you remember, God was very upset with the way humanity was turning out. Particularly with the communities of Sodom and Gomorrah. They were to be destroyed as scripture says: by "brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven."

Lot, the only righteous man, was to be spared and was told to take his family and head for the hills, not looking back as they went. Genesis 19:26 "But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt." That would be too much salt...

How many of us, women and men, have looked back? We just can't leave the past to be the past. We get caught in a bad place and when God tries to pull us out we don't allow ourselves to be saved. Christ died for our mistakes. God then forgets them. They are put behind us and forgotten.

We have all sinned, but instead of miring in that bog of the past, we have to move forward and let what is behind us, be behind us. It takes salt to not look back, and looking back may mean getting stuck there forever. A pillar of salt would be too much salt...

As I listed before, salt has its place. Salt can look just like sugar, but one taste would tell you the difference. In the story of Esther, the king had complete control over the lives of everyone in his kingdom.

He made Esther his queen because of her good looks. Before that her place in history would have been to be a Hebrew wife, but the King never bothered to know this about her. Yet God elevated her life to one of influence within King Ahasuerus' court through her beauty.

When the evil Haman schemed to destroy all of the Hebrew people, Esther had to make a decision how to save her people. Her choice was between risking her life by addressing the king without being summoned, which was against the law and could have led to her death; or try to save herself and her people by addressing the issue with the king. Sweet Esther could have just let be what was to be. Had she lost her flavor? No, instead Esther said "I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish."

Esther had enough 'salt' to change the events of the story and save the Hebrew people. We have to be alert to know where the 'salt' in us belongs and where it doesn't belong...To use who we are in justice for the sake of others. You may not know when you will be called upon and for what. Be Salt: the right amount at the right time in the right place.

Though it is the human bones that hold most of our physical salt, it is noticed mostly by us through our blood, sweat and tears. And you thought that was just a music group from the late 1960's! What if your saltiness was draining out of you? What if your worth in salt was nothing, because of a condition that you could do nothing about?

Matthew 9 has three verses, that changes the life of another woman. Verses 20-22: "Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.' Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, 'Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.' And instantly the woman was made well."

We don't know her name. Jesus was on his way to heal another and this is just a moment in the scriptures. But because this woman, who shouldn't have even been present in the crowd because she was considered unclean, wanted more and believed Jesus could give it to her, she took a chance – and went and reached out just to touch his fringe. Her belief in the potential of that touch was what healed her. Do you have enough 'salt' to reach out even when you think your salt has lost all of its worth?

Where is seen the salt of your life? Is it just locked away waiting for the right moment? What greatness will become of it? Is it stored away until a time when it will be needed? One more important person from the scriptures: From the book of Joshua: Rahab, who had some hidden 'salt' stored away in herself.

God's word and reputation went before Joshua into the promised land. As Joshua came to Jericho those before him were in dread of what was about to happen to them. They had heard of what Joshua's God was doing as they moved forward into the land. We don't know what brought Rahab to a place in her life, where she lived as a prostitute. But her belief in a God who was coming to take over her city had brought her to a place where she was ready to deny her king. She hid the two spies from Joshua from the king of Jericho and then she helped them escape down the outside wall of the stronghold.

One article I read about Rahab was entitled Rahab's rehab. She negotiated the safety of her family with the two spies before they left. God granted that and more. If you jump way ahead in the Bible, she is mentioned again, in Matthew 1:5. Rahab became the mother of Boaz, who was the husband of Ruth and many generations later the lineage comes to Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born. In the Biblical world, where the line of family you came from was most important to who you were, God included 'some salty folks' in the plan.

No matter what your rehab from your past may look like, God has a place for you. God also has a flavorful plan for your life, which includes the use of the right amount of salt. Because it isn't a gender thing or just the women who shared their 'salt' I would mention what kind of salt it took for Christ to die on the cross for us. As his followers cheered him into the city, riding on a donkey, Luke 19:41-42 says: "As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, 'If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.'"

Jesus' tears for us, Jesus' salt for us was and is just enough for all of humanity to survive our humanness. As he said: "For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? ...Have salt in yourself, and be at peace with one another."

Salt is a precious commodity – A wise Scandinavian once said: "A gathering of life in community is like a good casserole-hotdish: A mix of ingredients, baked together and seasoned with just the right amount of salt." I was able to attend all three of the Circuit Charge Conferences and I am thankful for the saltiness we see in the men and women of Circuit 3 –Up North - United Methodist Churches.

They do so much to share their salt through their mission giving of money, prayers, and gifts of tangible goods, many of which are hand made. Blood, sweat and yes, even a few tears. Those who share their salt are an example to others of the service we can give, when we share our salt. As more and more people join in God's mission to the world we find that it is true: "When it rains it pours."