



**“No Cross,
No Crown”**

The Cross and Crown

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I think the people in Jesus’ day would be befuddled by the way we use salt in our day and age. Although they were aware of salt as a flavor-enhancer, in their day, salt was a precious commodity, used mainly as a preservative, to keep food from spoiling. Salting food didn’t mean sprinkling a little bit of it onto a dish to make it taste better, but, rather, immersing food in large quantities of the spice, to keep it from going bad.

When Jesus said that we were the salt of the earth, he didn’t mean that we are that little bit of spice that makes others’ lives more palatable. He was calling us to be a preserving element; to slow down and even reverse the rot and decay in the human spirit. How do we do that? We do it simply by being present and saturating our world with the Spirit of God. My father-in-law, the eminently quotable Otto Wegner, likes to point out that “the presence of God’s people guarantees the presence of God.” In the same way that we must not hide our light in a bowl, we must not limit our salt – God’s presence – to the confines of our church or our homes. We need to pour out that salt liberally wherever the need is – in or workplaces, in the places where we shop, around our neighbors and in our leisure activities.

Have you ever been in a long line that wasn’t moving when, all of a sudden, someone started complaining loudly or sighing dramatically? That mood is contagious, isn’t it? Or perhaps you’ve been on the phone with a help center, when the person on the other end was being curt, discourteous or dismissive. It’s easy for us to mirror the attitude that we receive, but that’s not being salt! Being salt means more than just keeping our own attitude in check. Our attitude and our spirit must be such that they stop the negativity from spreading. Sometimes, a joke or a simple expression of empathy can go a long way towards turning a situation around. The Holy Spirit can guide you in how to react; you only need to be willing to be salt.



Recognize how precious and rare your salt is and how desperately it’s needed in a world that tends towards negativity and despair. Finally, remember that salt must be applied in large quantities in order to be a preserving agent. The pleasant words with which we season our conversation add some much-needed freshness to our interactions, but in order to reverse the tide of decay, we must be all-in. Don’t be discouraged if you’re not seeing any changes. Just keep on being salt!

Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

(Mark 9:50; Colossians 4:6)

Thanks for Praying!

Push has come to shove! Our insurance policy expires within five days of this publication date, and we haven't found another provider. We have been working at this diligently, because we can't operate without insurance. Now is the time pray for miracles!







to

Our friends from the 39th Police District joined with us on our most recent family night.

We're praying with you!

If you're on our mailing list*, you're on our prayer list! If there's anything specific that we can join with you in praying about, please let us know.

From time to time, we hear from people who actually read these newsletters, and it's such an encouragement! Thanks for keeping in touch!

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* **Important:** If you'd rather not be on our mailing list, we won't be offended! Just call or drop us a note, and we'll remove you. (We'll still keep you on our prayer list!)

If you'd rather receive this letter via e-mail, please let us know!

Did you know?

Salt was such a valuable commodity in the early Roman empire that many roads, such as the Via Salaria (which translates to "the Salt Road"), were built specifically to enable the transportation of salt into the capital city. The word, "salary" comes from the Latin word for salt, and it's possible that a Roman soldier's *salarium* may, at one time, have been an allowance for buying salt.

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region ... When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. (Ezekiel 47:6,8,11)



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