

Luke 14:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

Analysis

Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? (Καλὸν τὸ ἅλας· ἐὰν δὲ καὶ τὸ ἅλας μωρανθῇ, ἐν τίνι ἀρτυθήσεται;)—Jesus declares salt (halas) kalon (good, excellent, valuable). Salt preserved food, enhanced flavor, and was used in sacrifices (Leviticus 2:13). But if salt mōranthē (becomes foolish, loses taste)—from mōrainō, to make foolish—its defining quality is lost. The question en tini artuthēsetai (wherewith shall it be seasoned?) exposes the absurdity: worthless salt cannot be re-salted.

Jesus applies this to disciples who lose their distinctiveness. Christians are the world's preservative and flavor (Matthew 5:13)—we prevent moral decay and make life palatable. Disciples who compromise, assimilate to culture, or lose gospel distinctiveness become worthless for kingdom purposes. Saltless salt is useless; compromised Christians are ineffective.

Historical Context

Ancient salt, often from Dead Sea or rock salt deposits, could become contaminated or mixed with impurities, losing saltiness. Such adulterated salt was worthless—couldn't season or preserve. Jesus uses this familiar reality to warn against spiritual compromise. The context (vv.25-33) discusses discipleship cost—salt imagery warns against half-hearted, compromised following.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. In what ways might you be losing your 'saltiness'—your Christian distinctiveness and preserving influence in culture?
2. How do comfort, fear of rejection, or desire for acceptance tempt you to compromise the gospel's 'flavor'?
3. What would it look like to recover saltiness that's been lost through cultural accommodation?

Interlinear Text

Καλὸν	τὸ	ἅλας	ἐὰν	δὲ	τὸ	ἅλας	μωρανθῇ
is good	G3588	Salt	if	but	G3588	Salt	have lost his savour
G2570		G217	G1437	G1161		G217	G3471
ἐν	τίνι	ἄρτυθήσεται					
wherewith	G5101	shall it be seasoned					
G1722		G741					

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 5:13 (Good): Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Colossians 4:6 (Parallel theme): Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.