

August 17, 2025

Influence - Salty People

[Colossians 3:12-15](#); [Psalm 34:8](#); [Matthew 5:13-16](#);

This sermon was preached by TJ Dickerson.

TJ was one of our Discipleship Elders and is the Regional Director of Young Life's Rocky Mountain Region.

***** Highlighted text is what appeared on screen for everyone.**

I would like to greet this morning with the words of the angel Gabriel as he greeted Mary, the chosen mother of Jesus.

“Good morning! You’re beautiful with God’s beauty, beautiful inside and out! God be with you.”

Luke 1:28 MSG

It's always great to be together. It's been a full summer for the Dickerson's:

- Camino in June (Taylor, Taiwan YL Staff, Friends from Switzerland, and Maiers)
- Finished up a certificate program in Spiritual Direction from Denver Seminary.
- For the last 3 weeks I was in Oregon leading some of our NWD staff, serving middle school kids and leaders. We did 3 weeks of WyldLife camping.
 - It is always an honor to watch kids respond to the Gospel.
 - Had the largest WyldLife camp at Creekside in their history: 510 kids and leaders

Since returning, I have been eating my brains out on sweet corn and Palisade peaches. One of Papa's greatest gifts He has given us in the Grand Valley is sweet corn and peaches.

Tammara and I love to cook. We consider ourselves “foodies”. We are adventurous eaters. Our kids were given no choice not to be.

- I love all kinds of flavors. Asian, Mediterranean, Mexican, Indian, Italian.
- Tammara wishes she was Italian.
- Although I have been working hard on giving up sugar, I still have a sweet tooth.
- Tammara is more savory.

Here are some of our favorite things....

- **Pic of salted caramel, dark chocolate with salt, and potato chips.**
 - Don't those look amazing?
 - Can you just taste the butter from the caramel, the richness from the chocolate?
 - Can you hear the crunch from the potato chips?
 - The picture is as good as the real thing, right?

- NO WAY

- Pictures can be priceless, but pictures of food don't satisfy the hunger pains.

[TJ brought samples of caramel, salted chocolate, and potato chips and shared them with some members of the congregation.]

- Where are my caramel and chocolate lovers (raise your hands) potato chip people?
 - “Would you rather look at caramels, chocolate, or chips or eat them?”

The same is true regarding our relationship with God. Would you rather have someone tell you that God loves you or show you His love? What would our family and friends suggest?

Taste and see that God is Good. Psalm 34:8

I do believe we eat with our eyes. But all great foods were meant to be eaten, put in the mouth...place it on your tongue, savor the flavors, slowing chewing and enjoying every bite.

- Have you ever been to a restaurant and said to your server, “I’ll just have the menu today.”

God’s flavors are meant to be encountered and experienced too. Words about God are good. They may get us out the door but true intimacy with God is always found in experience, honest encounters with Papa, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are meant to move through our whole being.

Trevor Hudson: Insight (information) is the consolation prize, but the grand prize is always an encounter.

This is what our friends, neighbors, peers at work, family and community need. People who will flesh out the God flavors and God colors for others to actually see, experience and witness.

This is what Jesus has instructed us to be to a wounded, broken and lost world. In this new series we are exploring what it means to be a God influencer. Helping shape and form this culture with small and large acts of God’s kindness and love.

- Tom reminded us earlier that we are here today, worshipping in this place because the early church and those who followed them ordered their lives around things that matter, real community, real expressions of God’s love.... And it had a great impact on those watching and receiving.

Jesus uses the words Salt and Light. Today we will focus on being Salty People.

- Not salty as in earthy, crude or bitter.
 - Although some non-believers may suggest that is what they often get from followers of Jesus, that is not what Jesus is needing.

- But rather, salty as one who enhances flavor, pulls out the sweet and savory flavors of God. The true flavors of God. The ones, when people taste (put it in their mouths) experience it....say God is Good.

Salt has always been an important ingredient to:

Salt:

- Enhances (draws out) flavors
- Creates thirst
- Preservative (creating longevity)

Back to our **picture** of the caramels, chocolate and potato chips. All three have been enhanced with a pinch of salt.

- The salt pulls out the rich buttery taste of the caramel.
- The salt on the chocolate enhances the complexities of the rich dark cocoa beans.
- The salt of the potato chip just makes it better and keeps you coming back for more. Have you ever had a potato chip without salt....no thanks.
- I hear for those who put salt on their watermelon that it actually helps bring out the sweetness of the melon.
- Ever had sourdough bread from Kulina Lani? Ever stop in to just buy a slice of bread with the salted butter?

Our theme passage is Matthew 5 and starts with an **emphatic YOU!!** As in who me? Jesus says, yah YOU!!

- This YOU, as Dale Bruner writes in his Matthew commentary is also better translated as a plural You...as in Ya'll or You Folks.
- You/me are Jesus's plan for people to encounter God. Others experiencing his goodness and love was always through the greater YOU...the body of Christ.
- As Tom has already mentioned. Jesus is not asking will you, could you or should you, He is saying **YOU - ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH.** I need you to be or better yet, the world needs you to be.

Take a moment and think about the qualities of God you enjoy the most. What flavors of God satisfy your greatest hungers and thirsts? I hope these are some of the flavors you are thinking about.

- Grace (unearned, undeserved but so worthy to receive)
- Forgiveness, over and over again.
- Unconditional love (think again what it means to be unconditional...no conditions. Or think about Romans 8 (nothing in all of creation will ever separate us from the love of God revealed (made known, or experienced) in Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Gentleness and kindness
- Committed and faithful (He is with me and for me)

- Generous
- Sacrificial

I'm sure our list could go on and on. Let me challenge YOU, us, to take these true images and qualities of God that we so need and count on and to do as Tammara and I's good friend Gary Emery (our marriage counselor) suggests **Mirror those Images of God** to one another. Reflect to others what God is actually like.

- Some of you might feel like God has appointed you to mirror his judgement upon the world...I'm not sure he is needing your help.
- Some might say, "I like to mirror his righteousness." Let me remind you that righteousness actually means doing the right God thing, not being Right all the time and arguing your rightness.

We are the Salt of the Earth, bringing out the God flavors, the real flavors to a world who looks at God as bland, boring and lacks real life nourishment.

The Apostle Paul in his letter to the church in Colossae gives more examples of God's nature that we need to mirror to others.

"Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful."

Colossians 3:12-15 NLT

- Again, God chose us and set us apart. It has always been His plan that we would be the expression of God's nature. We would be incarnate, putting flesh on what it looks like to be a child of God and part of His family. A family that is still not complete.

Let's look more closely at a few words that Paul says we need to put on and wear.

- Compassion - care/suffer with. Move towards.
 - Gospel writers often use this word to describe Jesus
 - Leper
 - Jesus, looking at a large crowd that had gathered...
 - had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. He moved toward them.

- Humility - “It’s not about me. It’s not about you.”
 - Jesus taught about his new kingdom with paradox.
 - You want to be first, get in the back of the line.
 - You want the best seat at the table, be a servant at the table.
 - The only one we elevate in this relationship is Jesus.
 - We are no longer propping up ourselves or turning the spotlight on us.
 - Our focus is always the other.
- Forgiveness. Not just a powerful word. But even more so a powerful act.
 - We let go of our grip on others when we offer forgiveness.
 - As John Mark Comer says - We let go of our expectations for the other to be God....always getting it right.
 - It’s so freeing. It’s a gift to give, but it requires humility.
 - It’s no longer about winning or being right.

As Paul has done in his other letters he does here in Colossians.

- Above all..... wrap it all up in love.
- 1 Corinthians 13: Three things will last forever - faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.
- “Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.”
Romans 12:10 NLT
- Plus, Jesus’ words are clear...Love God with all of you, not just parts, love your neighbor and love your enemy.

It has always been His love that has made the greatest transforming impact and it will always be the love of other people that influences us the most.

But before we bring this talk to a close is there anyone else that is bothered by what Jesus says regarding losing our saltiness? Quoting Jesus, “But how good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.”

Salt on its own is one of the most stable compounds ever. It actually doesn’t expire or lose its effectiveness. This is a metaphor that Jesus is using. He will never toss us aside. Too many truths and promises in Scripture that speak the opposite. But salt can lose its saltiness if it is diluted.

- May I suggest this is how we lose our saltiness too. We dilute ourselves with too many worries, distractions, busy and hurried lives.
- We dilute ourselves and lose our saltiness when our life mantra is more is better, I always need the newest and best thing, living with a scarcity mentality, get all you can now because it may not be available later. Caring more about our own advancement than those around you.

- We lose our saltiness when we prioritize our ideologies over loving our neighbor and caring for the least of these. Worse yet, we draw lines and create a posture of us vs. them.
- We lose our saltiness when our news feeds shape and form our theology around the kingdom of God more than the words of Jesus.

Jesus and the Good News just can't be our favorite snack that we enjoy from time to time. Jesus said of himself, "I am the bread of life...meaning, our every meal. We can't bring out the God flavors if we are not feasting on God himself.

How do we regain our saltiness? I love what Paul says in Ephesians 5.

"Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that." Ephesians 5:1-2
MSG

- In order for us to watch and see what God does we have to get up close.
- Again, Paul suggests that we mirror the image of God.
 - Learn how He loves and love like that.
- Learn how He loves by allowing Him to love you fully.
- Take notice of how He loves: it is not cautious, but extravagant.
 - His love was sacrificial, meaning it comes at a cost.

But the only way we will regain our saltiness is to keep company with Him and learn a life of love.

- Our being effective salt is determined by our close proximity to the One whose greatest longing is you.

I would like to close in a pray that was offered this week from Lectio 365:

Holy Spirit, reveal to me the things that hinder me giving a wholehearted yes to you. What am I afraid of? What am I clinging to?

Lord, I want to say yes. I consent to you interrupting my life, claiming it for your own, to use it for your divine purpose. I say yes. I offer you my body as a living sacrifice, to claim it for your own, and fill it with your divine presence.

Your divine purpose to love me fully so I can love others, all others, fully too.