

SOME MORE SALT NEEDED

Most winters I can get through with only needing one bag of salt for my driveway and steps. I tend to use it sparingly with having a dog to take out regularly. Like other years, I started off this winter with a bag of salt ready for another Canadian winter. After the freezing rain we received on Boxing Day my driveway became a sheet of ice. It did not take long for my bag of salt to be used up. I went over to my local Home Hardware on Sunday afternoon to purchase some more only to discover they were sold out. The staff said that they were expecting another shipment on Monday morning. I noticed one customer was eyeballing the salt sold for water softeners as a possible alternative.

When I arrived home empty handed, my neighbor happened to pull into his icy driveway after being away for a few days. As soon as he got out of his vehicle, he had to grab his car to avoid sliding all the way down his driveway. An hour or so later I was outside in the rain doing my best to chip away at the ice on my driveway. My neighbor happened to come out to do the same and shared how he had 4 bags of salt. Even though my neighbor is a Montreal Canadiens fan he showed kindness toward his Toronto Maple Leaf-loving one. He offered me one of his four bags of salt to throw down on my driveway. I gratefully accepted and told him I would replace it when Home Hardware got their shipment the next day.

When I stopped into Home Hardware on Monday morning the shipment had not arrived yet. At the same time, I received a message from my neighbour that he would like a few more bags of salt if I found them there. I stopped into Home Hardware again on Monday afternoon and noticed they had some salt. Unfortunately, the brand they got in was three times the price that I normally pay. Of course, many of you know how cheap I am and the dilemma I was finding myself in.

Thankfully at the same moment my neighbor texted again and said he was at No Frills and found 4 bags of salt. It is a short drive for me from Home Hardware to No Frills, so I headed over immediately. As I got out of my car I ran into my neighbour coming out of the store with the 4 bags of salt in his grocery cart. I told him I saw his text and hurried right over to buy some myself and get his replacement bag. It was then that he informed me he bought the last 4 bags the store had. Being the kind neighbor that he is, despite being a Montreal Canadiens fan, he gave me two of his four bags so I could continue to put more salt on my icy driveway. I do not usually need too much salt during winter, but this one has been proving different so far.

This need for more salt reminded me of this passage from Luke's gospel when Jesus spoke, wanting more of it from His followers:

Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? Flavorless salt is good neither for the soil nor the manure pile. It is thrown away. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand! (Luke 14:34-35)

Jesus' comments here tie in as well with His teachings during His Sermon on the Mount on how Christians are to be the salt of the earth (**Matthew 5:13**). In both instances, Jesus was illustrating how the ingredients in salt should also be on display in His followers. These qualities include:

- Making a difference to the flavor of the world we live in just as salt changes a meat's flavor
- Counteracting the moral decay in society by how we live, just as salt preserves food from decay.

Jesus pointed out in each of these illustrations that if Christians lose their distinctive saltiness, then they are failing to represent Christ in the world properly by being His witnesses.

During this time when salt is in high demand, Jesus is reminding His followers of His need for us to remain salty. As we come to the end of 2025 and begin this new year of 2026 it is a fitting time for us to examine our saltiness when it comes to Christ. ***The question we need to ask ourselves is whether we are still making an effort to affect the world in a positive way for Christ or are we just blending in and not showing how a relationship with Jesus can bring out the best flavor in our lives.*** I think we are all in agreement how much our world needs to see us as believers living our lives as "Salt of the Earth." It is a flavor that can bring out the best in us.

This was certainly the case when it came to my neighbour and me. Our exchanges in regards to salt showed an attitude of sharing, helping, and blessing one another. This is the kind of seasoning that this world needs more of in 2026. If we have lost that saltiness, let's start off this new year replenishing this aspect when it comes to our faith. We need this key ingredient in our faith journey, and the world needs it too.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean