

The Spice of Life

**Sermon notes for the sermon
given by Rev. Dr. Gregory Young
Presented on Sunday, February 6, 2011**

Think of how different our lives would be without salt and light. Most times when I sit down to eat a meal I reach for the salt. Over the years I have gotten better at this and find myself doing it less and less but I just cannot have French fries with adding a little salt for taste. Our bodies need salt and the natural minerals that are found in salt to life and thrive. The problem with salt comes in when it has been processed to the point where all that is left is sodium. The fact remains that salt is beneficial and needed for us to live. Salt is also a preservative. Before refrigeration it was used to cure meats so that they would last longer. Salt would slow down the breakdown of the meat so that it could be available for several weeks instead of going untreated and lasting only a day or two.

Have you ever tried walking down the street without a flash light during a power failure? Or maybe you were driving down a lonely, country road and you accidentally turn off the lights on your car? Light is essential for us to see and to live. Without the sun's light there would be no life on this planet. Without light in our homes we would be totally at the mercy of our other senses and probably find ourselves going to bed much earlier than we do now. Both salt and light are essential for our living.

In the Gospel reading for today Jesus challenges his followers to be salt and light in and for the world. Just as a lighthouse would bring safety and hope to a ship at sea so we are to shine with God's grace in such a way that others will come to see the hope of God's saving grace in and through us. Just as salt preserves and flavors

so the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ is to be shared with those around us.

If our church were suddenly gone from this place; if we finally got to the point where we could not pay our bills and became tired of driving to New Brunswick for worship, study, fellowship, committee meetings and community service who would miss us? Think of that for a moment – who would miss us if we were no longer a Christian faith community located on the corner of George and Liberty Streets? Would those who heard the Christmas carols of our youth and families during this past December miss us? How about those who received a warm cup of hot chocolate and were able to come into our sanctuary out of cold during the city Christmas tree lighting? Would the students at Lord Stirling school who are tutored by a small group of volunteers miss us? Would the men who spend two weeks each winter in our basement sleeping on cots and having a break from the cold miss us? Would the families who are served by the pre-school that meets in our education building miss us? Would Elijah’s Promise, who we support with weekly non-perishable food and financial donations, miss us? Would the handful of people who had vegetable gardens on our cemetery at the corner of Neilson Street and Tabernacle Way miss us? Would those who occasionally attend a program sponsored by the State Theater held in our sanctuary miss us? How about those who come to our church for assistance, guidance and counsel; or those who desire to celebrate their wedding in God’s house and those who simply want to draw near the symbols of our faith to be reminded of God’s holy presence? Who would miss us?

Occasionally I meet with leaders from other faith communities in this city and I often hear comments that lead me to believe that they believe our church is strategically located, in the heart of New

Brunswick. They see business people, college students, immigrants, public servants passing our doors everyday and they always ask me what we are doing to open ourselves and our community for the good of all of those who are outside. Yes, we do let our light shine in many ways and as we share our faith with those we serve we become salt for God's sake. There is more, however, to be done. For many we are a beacon of hope and a community of grace. For many more we are a community with locked doors to our sanctuary that only open on Sunday or for special occasions. God, in Christ, has become the spice of our lives but if the salt has lost its flavor and its ability to preserve what good is it; what good are we? God's light has shone brightly in our lives but if we keep that light locked up and hidden only for the benefit of us then we have missed the whole point of the gift of God's light. Our life together as a congregation has made a difference and is making a difference – we are living proof of that reality. Outside these walls there are many just waiting to hear and see the hope of God in Christ. Let our light so shine that others may come, be saved and give glory and praise to God.