

# CORROSIVE CHRISTIANITY

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July 19, 2005  
NewsWithViews.com

I was listening to Christian-talk radio this week. You know the type. Programming hosted by a religious expert that draws sleepy, consumed-with-the-rapture Christians, focusing on end-time prophecy, and what version of the Bible you must read in order to get into Heaven. Majoring on the minors.

Reaching forward with my hand to change the channel, an unusually sweet Christian man's voice enticed me to draw my finger back from the scan button, as the host said *"you're on the air, Chris"*.

*"I am concerned about the hate I hear from my fellow Christians today", this soft spoken man said. "It seems so much of what I hear on the radio today is so corrosive. Shouldn't we be trying to love people into the Kingdom? It is a lot easier to draw flies with honey."*

*"Flies with honey"*, I thought as I hit the country music station button, where they actually sing about sin, not wanting to hear the host's sugary response.

As I sat at the traffic light, trying not to scream, I glanced at the old 1988 Honda sitting in the lane beside me. Consumed by rust, it was a miracle that the old tan buggy still was able to wiggle down the road. *"Wow"*, I thought out loud. *"The salt sure has corroded that car."*

Salt. Corrosion. Christian radio.

According to Webster, corrosive means to wear away gradually by chemical reaction.

In Matthew 5:13, Jesus told us *"You are the salt of the earth"*.

Ever wonder why He chose salt?

Why didn't He say:

- *"You are the pepper of the world"*.
- Or *"You are the Tabasco-sauce of the world"*
- Better yet, for today's rapidly becoming good-for-nothing-Christians, *"You are the sugar of the world."*

No, Jesus chose salt. Try as I might, I can't think of a single situation where salt tastes sweet.

A quick internet study on the properties of salt will show that it is, by its very nature, corrosive. Salt, an acid, is a combination of sodium and chloride, either element taken alone is toxic to the human body.

What was Jesus thinking? Why didn't he tell us to be the "honey" of the earth. Was He confused?

If Jesus told us that we were salt wouldn't it be a good idea to study the function of the thing he told us to be? Wouldn't it be a good idea to figure out what salt does?

- Salt is a preservative...keeps things from rotting. Know anything rotting in the world?
- Salt heals....your grandma every tell you to gargle salt water? Lot's of hurting folks out there.
- Salt gives flavor...ever hear someone comment on how potatoey their French fries taste? No, the correct response is "Boy, those French fries taste salty." Salt changes the taste of everything.
- Salt causes thirst...makes one want to drink.....know anyone thirsty for Truth?
- Salt melts ice...only the Gospel can melt a cold, stony heart.
- Salt purifies...alkali, a form of salt, is the leading ingredient in soap. Couldn't our culture use a good cleaning?
- Salt kills slugs....at least that is what a young boy told me when I spoke at a school assembly.

Christians are supposed to be salt.

Sugar may make us feel good when we spread it around, but all sugar does is make something easier to swallow, if you know what I mean..

*"Just a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down"* Mary Poppins sang.

The American culture is sick and decaying and we want to spread sugar.

I saw Joel Osteen on Larry King last week, promoting his book *You're Best Life Now*. Having spent weeks atop the New York Times best sellers list, he, along with Rick Warren, is the face of modern evangelical Christianity. Osteen is pastor of Lakewood Church in Houston, a congregation of 30,000, the fastest growing church in America and has a world-wide television ministry. Smiling, sweet, every hair in place, Pastor Joel and Mr. King engaged in the following dialogue.

**KING:** *So then a Jew is not going to heaven?*

**OSTEEN:** *No. Here's my thing, Larry, is I can't judge somebody's heart. You know? Only god can look at somebody's heart, and so -- I don't know. To me, it's not my business to say, you know, this one is or this one isn't. I just say, here's what the bible teaches and I'm going to put my faith in Christ. And I just I think it's wrong when you go around saying, you're saying you're not going, you're not going, you're not going, because it's not exactly my way. I'm just...*

**KING:** *Because we've had ministers on who said, your record don't count. You either believe in Christ or you don't. If you believe in Christ, you are, you are going to heaven. And if you don't no matter what you've done in your life, you ain't.*

**OSTEEN:** *Yeah, I don't know. There's probably a balance between. I believe you have to know Christ. But I think that if you know Christ, if you're a believer in God, you're going to have some good works. I think it's a cop-out to say I'm a Christian but I don't ever do anything ...*

KING: *What if you're Jewish or Muslim, you don't accept Christ at all?*

OSTEEN: *You know, I'm very careful about saying who would and wouldn't go to heaven. I don't know ...*

KING: *If you believe you have to believe in Christ? They're wrong, aren't they?*

OSTEEN: *Well, I don't know if I believe they're wrong. I believe here's what the Bible teaches and from the Christian faith this is what I believe. But I just think that only God will judge a person's heart. I spent a lot of time in India with my father. I don't know all about their religion. But I know they love God. And I don't know. I've seen their sincerity. So I don't know. I know for me, and what the Bible teaches, I want to have a relationship with Jesus.*

And a later give and take.

KING: *Do you ever involve politics in the sermons?*

OSTEEN: *Never do. My father never ...*

KING: *Never mention President Bush?*

OSTEEN: *Well, only to pray. Only to pray. We prayed for President Bush, Clinton, all of them. But I've never been political. My father hasn't. I just, I have no ...*

KING: *How about issues that the church has feelings about? Abortion? Same-sex marriages?*

OSTEEN: *Yeah. You know what, Larry? I don't go there. I just ...*

KING: *You have thoughts, though.*

OSTEEN: *I have thoughts. I just, you know, I don't think that a same-sex marriage is the way God intended it to be. I don't think abortion is the best. I think there are other, you know, a better way to live your life. But I'm not going to condemn those people. I tell them all the time our church is open for everybody.*

KING: *You don't call them sinners?*

OSTEEN: *I don't.*

That's cotton candy folks, that ain't salt. No wonder his church is overflowing, he's preaching the gospel according to Rodney King, "Can't we all just get along?"

America is in trouble, because most churches are serving syrup. The largest church in America takes no position on the great moral issues of the day. Men marry men, 10 commandments ripped off of buildings, evolution trumps creation, abortion is a choice. That's okay, come to our church, who are we to judge?

It takes courage to confront sin, to be the corrosive eating away at the framework of the world. Sad to say, but the world has become the salt of the church. Want proof? Doesn't the average teenager in your church dress like Britney Spears?

Just before Jesus told us we were salt, he warned us of the consequences of becoming the corrosive. Mathew 5:11-12

*Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.* When was the last time you were persecuted for being sugar?

You might lose some friends, you might lose some church members, and you might make some enemies. But it is time you ask yourself if you intend to build a church, or be the church.

*For the time is come that Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? -- 1 Peter 4:17*

I learned from a white-water rafting trip that once you allow the water into the raft, you spend the rest of the time bailing.

It's time to bail.

It is time for some Truth, for a return to a salt-laced, corrosive, slug-killing Gospel.

Now is the time to pass the salt!

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*In 1999 Coach Daubenmire was sued by the ACLU for praying with his teams while coaching high school in Ohio. He now spends his energy fighting for Christian principles in the public domain.*

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