

So many kinds of salt (Mark 9:38-50)

Last year I was told I needed to be on a high-sodium diet for medical reasons.

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Have you noticed how many different kinds of salt exist? Up until last year I never paid much attention to salt. I didn't use it in cooking or baking and only noticed it when I wanted it for French fries or if I'd mistakenly purchased potato chips without salt.

That changed when I was told I needed to be on a high-sodium diet for medical reasons.

Suddenly that old blue canister of salt was the least appealing of my options. I discovered sea salt. Then black and pink and gray sea salt. Then smoked salt and flavored salt. Salt in chunks both large and small; finely ground salt and coarsely ground salt. My salt options were suddenly numerous. And it's taken me more than a year to figure out just what kind of salt I most enjoy. It's been a surprising adventure.

I can't help but think about the many containers of salt in my cabinet when I read the end of this Mark text (9:50): "Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another." What if they all stopped being salty? Or what if all their distinct flavors became indistinct? What if they somehow became discontent with their job of sitting on my shelf and enabling me to increase my daily sodium intake, and they started to fight with each

other? I can't help but see this mess of salt that is no longer salt.

Jesus wasn't referring to my salt collection when he spoke to his disciples. But it's what I picture when I read this text. I see the church as all the different kinds of salt. You see where I'm going, don't you? It doesn't matter if you are the old blue canister of iodized salt or if you are regular sea salt or smoked salt or salt of a different color. You can't shove one off the shelf or stop being salty. You are salt. I am salt. We have a job to do. To do it best we have to recognize our own saltiness and the saltiness of those who share the shelf. Then we have to live in peace with one another.

Wouldn't it be great if the church went on a high-sodium diet and we learned to value every variety of salt for what it contributes to the sacred palate?