

# THE TRENTON BULLETIN

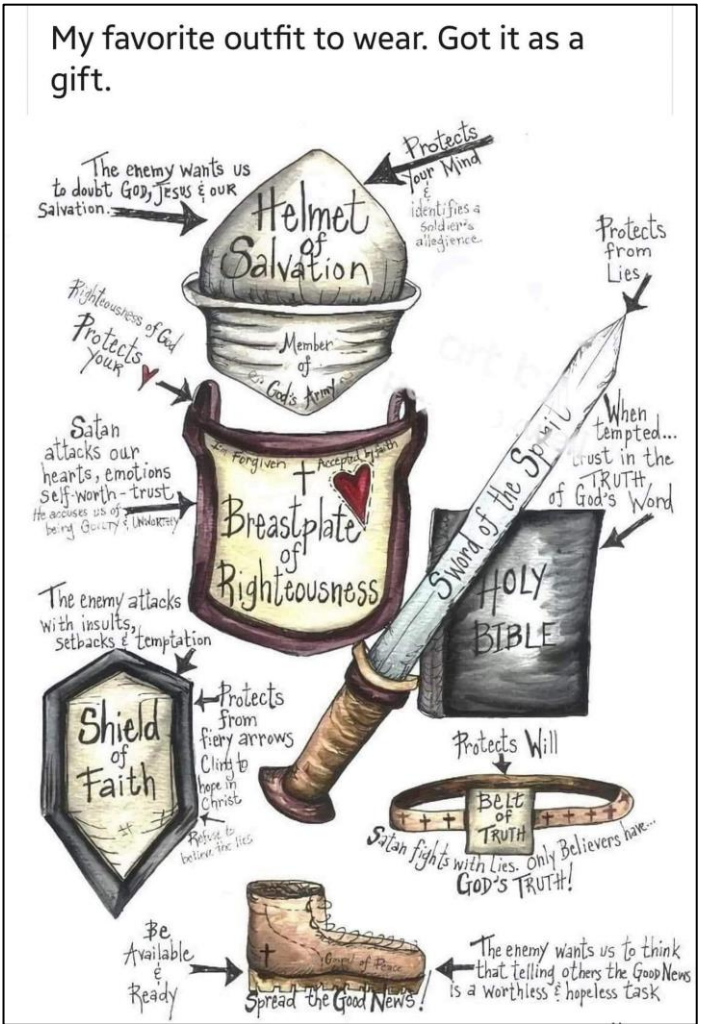
## Salty Language (Jerold Redding)

I have always heard the expression "salty language" used in such a way that would indicate something, at the very least, distasteful. When I look for "salty" in dictionaries, I find that, apart from the literal meaning of something containing salt, the definitions have a negative connotation, i.e., language that is earthy, crude, suggestive, etc. On the other hand, sweet and pure speech is considered as having the opposite connotation.

Salty language—"seasoned with salt"—in our text clearly has no negative connotation at all. In fact, it is an admirable kind of speech that is encouraged by the apostle. I find this interesting. The different concepts have to do with how salt is valued. In ancient times, salt was valuable, almost precious. It could be regarded as a spice that imparted a pleasant taste to most foods. It was also valuable as a preservative. It was expensive because it was not easily obtained. Roman soldiers were sometimes paid in salt (from which we get the word "salary"). Salt was often the "legal tender" used to purchase slaves or pay servants (thus, we have the term "not worth his salt").

Even more interesting (and significant) is the spiritual connotations of salt in the Scriptures. Leviticus 2:13 requires that all grain offerings be offered with salt, which is spoken of as "the salt of the covenant of your God." Furthermore, covenant obligations may be referred to simply as "a covenant of salt forever before the Lord for you and for your offspring with you" (Numbers 18:19). "Ought you not to know," Abijah asks Israel, "that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?" (2 Chronicles 13:5). Eating the salt of a king implies a commitment of loyalty (Ezra 4:14). For another instance of salt as an important part of the sacrifices, see Ezra 6:9-10.

Now read and understand the importance of Matthew 5:13, "You are the salt of the earth." The whole context of our text has to do with the language



that should be found on a Christian's lips and, specifically, the effect of that speech on "outsiders." Paul first mentions concern for his own speech in view of his desire that "God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ ... that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak" (4:3-4). After this, Paul immediately addresses the need for disciples to behave "wisely toward outsiders." Behaving wisely has to do with the use of time and speech, as our text states.

"Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person" (Colossians 4:5-6). Paul urges us to use language "seasoned with salt," which he prefixes with the word "gracious." Certainly, he has in mind words that are sweet, clear, pure, etc., and not the kind of sharp,

unsavory, distasteful language that our culture thinks of as salty.

I have no problem understanding any of this. But when I think about the impact of my speech on outsiders, I suspect that more often than not, I focus on the phrase, "so that you may know how you ought to answer each person." Do you see what I mean? I can easily focus on—let me put it this way—the debate. Maybe such phrases as "answering the challenge" or "defending the faith" would describe it.

But then I think, surely there is more to it than just this. What about my language at all other times—which would be most of my speech? What about that? Do I ever ask myself, "Is the way I talk 'gracious' and 'seasoned with salt?'" Is it, in general, pure and sweet? Does it have the overall effect of opening doors for those who are outsiders? Is it behaving wisely toward outsiders? Maybe I should think about that a lot. How about you?

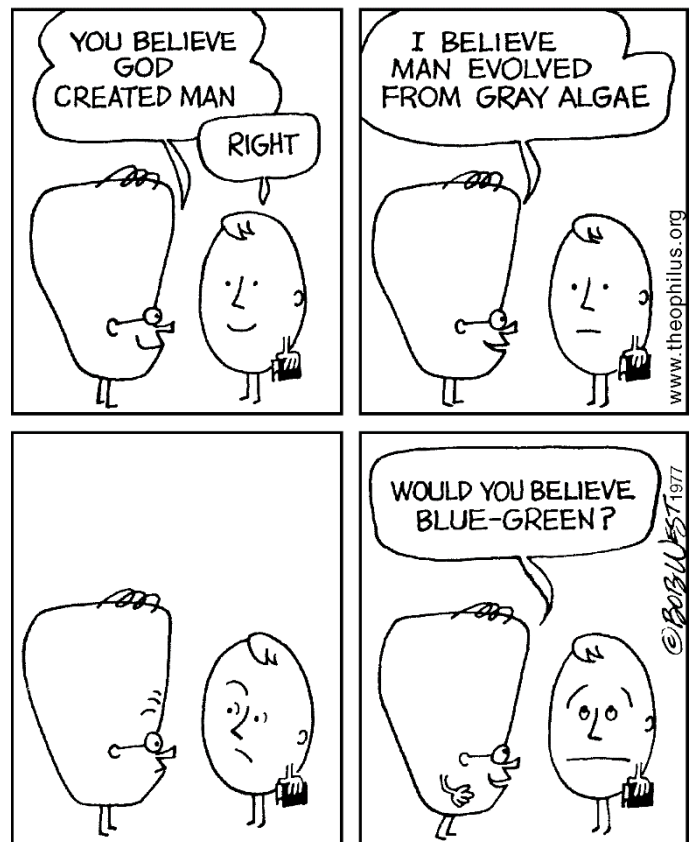
Prayer: Father, I talk a lot—often, I'm afraid, a lot more than I should. But I also fear that my speech often reflects my personal anger, frustrations, and selfishness. Please give me the wisdom to use my speech, even in ordinary affairs, so a door may be opened for outsiders to be drawn to you. Amen. *(Gerald is the grandfather of Tommy Redding)*



- ✓ Be fishers of men; you catch them, He will clean them.
- ✓ A family altar can alter a family.
- ✓ A lot of kneeling will keep you in good standing.
- ✓ Don't put a question mark where God put a period.
- ✓ Don't wait for six strong men to take you to church.
- ✓ Exercise daily. Walk with the Lord!
- ✓ Wisdom has two parts. Having a lot to say and not saying it.
- ✓ Jesus died for you. Will you live for Him?

## THEOPHILUS

Creation or Evolution?



## Church Attendance

Adrian Rogers maintains that most Americans attend church at least three times in their life. When they are hatched, matched, and dispatched. The first time, they threw water. The second time, they threw rice. The third time, they threw dirt.

## Honoring Parents

Ancient history records that a certain city was besieged and, at length, obliged to surrender. In the city, two brothers had, in some way, obliged the conquering general; consequently, they received permission to leave the city before it was set on fire, taking with them as much of their property as each could carry about his person. Accordingly, the two generous youths appeared at the city gates, one carrying their father and the other carrying their mother.

