

Bonded to Jesus Christ: Becoming the Salt of the Earth

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Kuunganishwa kwa Yesu Kristo: Kuwa Chumvi ya Dunia

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As we remain bonded to the Lord, our lives will naturally reflect His light, and we will become the salt of the earth.

The Savior taught that when we are “called unto [His] everlasting gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant, [we] are accounted as the salt of the earth.” Salt is made of two elements bonded together. We can’t be salt on our own; if we are to be salt of the earth, we must be bonded to the Lord, and that is what I see as I mingle with members of the Church around the world—I see faithful members of the Church bonded to the Lord, committed in their efforts to serve others and be the salt of the earth.

Your unwavering dedication is a shining example. Your service is appreciated and cherished.

Our youth have shown remarkable courage and devotion. They have enthusiastically embraced the work of family history, and their frequent visits to the house of the Lord are a testament to their dedication. Their willingness to devote time and energy to serve missions across the globe reflects a deep and abiding faith. They are not merely participating but leading the way in becoming disciples bonded to Jesus Christ. Their service radiates light and hope, touching countless lives. To you, the youth of the Church, we express our heartfelt thanks for your inspiring service. You are not just the Church’s future but its present. And you are indeed the salt of the earth!

I love the Lord Jesus Christ and feel blessed by the opportunity to serve alongside you in the

Kadiri tunavyobaki tumeunganishwa kwa Bwana, maisha yetu kwa asili yataakisi nuru Yake, na tutakuwa chumvi ya dunia.

Mwokozi alifundisha kwamba wakati “tunapokuwa tumeitwa kwenye injili [Yake] isiyo na mwisho, na kuahidi kwa agano lisilo na mwisho, [sisi] tunahesabika kama chumvi ya dunia.” Chumvi imetengenezwa kwa elementi mbili zilizounganishwa pamoja. Hatuwezi kuwa chumvi peke yetu; ikiwa tunataka kuwa chumvi ya dunia, lazima tuunganishwe kwa Mwokozi, na hilo ndilo ninaloliona ninapochangamana na waumini wa Kanisa ulimwenguni kote—ninawaona waumini waaminifu wa Kanisa waliounganishwa kwa Bwana, waliojitolea katika juhudi zao za kuwatumikia wengine na kuwa chumvi ya dunia.

Msimamo wako imara ni mfano unaong’ara. Huduma yako inatambulika na kuthaminiwa.

Vijana wetu wameonesha ujasiri mkubwa na kujitolea kwa dhati. Kwa ari wameikumbatia kazi ya historia ya familia, na matembezi yao ya mara kwa mara kwenye nyumba ya Bwana ni ushuhuda kwenye msimamo wao. Utayari wao kutenga muda na nguvu ili kuhudumu misheni kote ulimwenguni huakisi imani kubwa na ya kudumu. Hawashiriki tu bali wanaongoza njia katika kuwa wanafunzi waliounganishwa kwa Yesu Kristo. Huduma yao hunururisha nuru na tumaini, ikigusa maisha yasiyo na idadi. Kweni ninyi, vijana wa Kanisa, tunatoa shukrani zetu za dhati kwa huduma yenu yenye mwongozo wa kiungu. Ninyi si tu kizazi kijacho cha Kanisa bali cha sasa. Na hakika ninyi ni chumvi ya dunia!

Ninampenda Bwana Yesu Kristo na ninahisi kubarikiwa kwa fursa ya kuhudumu sambam-

Lord's Church. Our unity and strength, grounded in our shared faith, reassure us that we are never alone in this journey. Together, we can continue to build the kingdom of God, rooted in service, love, and unwavering faith.

When Jesus Christ taught by the Sea of Galilee, He often used everyday elements familiar to His audience to convey profound spiritual truths. One such element was salt. Jesus declared, "[You] are the salt of the earth," a statement rich in meaning and significance, especially for the people of His time, who understood the multifaceted value of salt.

The ancient craft of salt harvesting in the Algarve, the southern region of my home country of Portugal, dates back thousands of years to the era of the Roman Empire. Remarkably, the methods used by the salt workers, known as *marnotos*, have changed little since then. These dedicated artisans employ traditional techniques, performing their work entirely by hand, maintaining a legacy that has endured through the centuries.

This ancient method harvests what is called "flower of salt." To fully appreciate the intricate process of harvesting the flower of salt, it is essential to understand the environment in which it is produced. The Algarve's coastal salt marshes provide the ideal conditions for salt production. Seawater is channeled into shallow ponds, known as salt pans, where it is left to evaporate under the intense sun. As the water evaporates, the flower of salt forms delicate crystals on the surface of the salt pans. These crystals are incredibly pure and have a unique, crisp texture. The *marnotos* carefully skim the crystals from the water's surface using specialized tools, a process that requires great skill and precision. In Portugal, this fine-quality salt is referred to as "salt cream" because it can be gently skimmed away like cream rising to the top of milk. This delicate salt is cherished for its purity and exceptional flavor, making it a prized ingredient in culinary arts.

Just like the *marnotos* put forth great effort to ensure they harvest the highest quality of salt, so should we, as the Lord's covenant people, always do our very best so that our love and example

ba na ninyi katika Kanisa la Bwana. Umoja na nguvu yetu, vilivyojikita katika imani yetu ya pamoja, hutuhakikishia kwamba kamwe hatuko peke yetu katika safari hii. Kwa pamoja, tunaweza kuendelea kuujenga ufalme wa Mungu ulio na mizizi katika huduma, upendo na imani isiyoyumba.

Wakati Yesu Kristo alipofundisha kando ya Bahari ya Galilaya, mara nyingi alitumia vitu vya kila siku vilivyojulikana kwa hadhira yake ili kufikisha kweli muhimu za kiroho. Moja ya vitu hivyo ilikuwa chumvi. Yesu alitamka, "[Ninyi] ni chumvi ya dunia," kauli iliyojaa maana na umuhimu, hususani kwa watu wa wakati Wake ambao walielewa thamani anuai za chumvi.

Ujuzi wa kale wa uvunaji chumvi katika Algarve, mkoa wa kusini wa nchi yangu ya Ureno, unarudi hadi maelfu ya miaka kwenye kipindi cha Ufalme wa Kirumi. Kwa kasi ya ajabu, mbinu zilizotumiwa na wafanyakazi wa chumvi, waliojulikana kamamarnotos, zimebadilika kidogo tangu wakati ule. Mafundi hawa waliojitolea kwa dhati hutumia mbinu ya kizamani, wakifanya kazi yao yote kwa mikono, wakiacha urithi ambao umedumu kwa karne nyingi.

Mbinu hii ya kale huvuna kile kinachoitwa "ua la chumvi." Ili kuthamini kikamilifu mchakato mgumu wa kuvuna ua la chumvi, ni muhimu kujua mazingira ambayo kwayo ua la chumvi hutengenezwa. Mabwawa ya chumvi ya pwani ya Algarve hutoa mazingira rafiki kwa ajili ya uzalishaji wa chumvi. Maji ya bahari huchepushwa ndani ya mabwawa yenye kina kifupi yajulikanayo kama vikaangio vya chumvi, ambapo huachwa ili yakauke kwenye jua kali. Maji yanapokauka, ua la chumvi hutengeneza fuwele laini juu ya ardhi ya vikaangio vya chumvi. Fuwele hizi ni safi ajabu na zina umbile la kipekee, linaloweza kuvunjika. Hawa *Marnotos* kwa uangalifu huondoa fuwele kutoka uso wa maji kwa kutumia kifaa maalumu, mchakato unaohitaji ujuzi mkubwa na usahihi. Ureno, chumvi hii yenye kiwango kizuri inaitwa "krimu ya chumvi" kwa sababu inaweza kuondolewa taratibu kama vile krimu inayoinuka juu ya maziwa. Chumvi hii laini inathaminiwa kwa usafi wake na ladha ya kipekee, ikiifanya iwe kiungo cha thamani katika sanaa za upishi.

Kama vile *marnotos* wanavyoweka juhudi kubwa kuhakikisha wanavuna chumvi ya ubora wa hali ya juu, ndivyo ilivyo kwetu sisi, kama watu wa Bwana wa agano, daima tunafanya kwa

are, as much as possible, a pure reflection of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

In the ancient world, salt was more than just a seasoning—it was a vital preservative and a symbol of purity and covenant. People knew that salt was essential for preserving food and enhancing flavor. They also understood the grave implications of salt losing its saltiness, or savor, by becoming contaminated or diluted.

Like salt can lose its essence, we can also lose our spiritual vitality if our faith in Jesus Christ becomes casual. We may look the same on the outside, but without a strong inner faith, we lose our ability to make a difference in the world and bring out the best in those around us.

So how can we channel our energy and efforts to make a difference and be the change the world needs today? How can we preserve discipleship and continue to be a positive influence?

The words of our dear prophet still echo in my mind: “God wants us to work together and help each other. That is why He sends us to earth in families and organizes us into wards and stakes. That is why He asks us to serve and minister to each other. That is why He asks us to live in the world but not be of the world.”

When our lives are filled with purpose and service, we avoid spiritual apathy; on the other hand, when our lives are deprived of divine purpose, meaningful service to others, and sacred opportunities for pondering and reflection, we gradually become suffocated by our own activity and self-interest, risking losing our savor. The antidote to this is to continue to be involved in service—being anxiously engaged in good works and the betterment of ourselves and the society we live in.

My dear brothers and sisters, what a blessing we all have today to belong to the Church of Jesus Christ and have the opportunity to serve in His Church. Our circumstances may vary, but we all can make a difference.

Remember the *marnotos*, the salt workers; they use simple tools to harvest the best crystals, the best salt! We too can do simple things that, with consistent efforts in small and meaningful

uwezo wetu wote ili kwamba upendo na mfano wetu viwe, kadiri iwezekanavyo, taswira halisi ya Mwokozi wetu, Yesu Kristo.

Katika ulimwengu wa kale, chumvi ilikuwa zaidi ya kiungo—ilikuwa dawa ya kuzuia kuoza na ishara ya usafi na agano. Watu walijua kwamba chumvi ilikuwa muhimu kwa ajili ya kuhifadhi chakula na kuleta ladha. Pia walielewa madhara makubwa ya chumvi kupoteza uhalisia wake au ladha kwa kuharibiwa au kuchanganywa.

Kama vile chumvi inavyoweza kupoteza kiini chake, sisi pia tunaweza kupoteza uhai wa kiroho ikiwa imani yetu katika Yesu Kristo inakuwa ya kawaida. Tunaweza kuonekana vilevile kwa nje, lakini bila imani imara ya ndani, tunapoteza uwezo wetu wa kuleta tofauti ulimwenguni na kuleta utu bora zaidi kwa wale wanaotuzunguka.

Hivyo, tunawezaje kuelekeza nguvu na juhu-di yetu ili kuleta tofauti na kuwa badiliko ambalo ulimwengu unalihitaji leo? Tunawezaje kutunza uanafunzi na kuendelea kuwa ushawishi chanya?

Maneno ya nabii wetu mpendwa bado yana-toa mwangwi mawazoni mwangu: “Mungu anatutaka tufanye kazi pamoja na tusaidiane. Hiyo ndiyo sababu ametutuma duniani katika familia na kutuweka kwenye kata na vigingi. Hiyo ndiyo sababu anatutaka tutumikiane na kuhudumiana. Hiyo ndiyo sababu Yeye anatutaka tuishikati-kauli ulimwengu lakini tusiweka ulimwengu.”

Wakati maisha yetu yanapokuwa yamejawa na lengo na huduma, tunaepuka kutojali kiroho; kwa upande mwingine, wakati maisha yetu yanaponyimwa lengo la kiungu, huduma ya maa-na kwa wengine, na fursa takatifu za kutafakari na kuvuta taswira, polepole tunazongwa na shughuli zetu wenyewe na mapendeleo binafsi, tukiingia kwenye hatari ya kupoteza ladha yetu. Kinyume cha hili ni kuendelea kujishughulisha katika huduma—kujishughulisha kwa bidii katika kazi njema na kujiboresha sisi wenyewe na jamii tunayoishi nayo.

Kaka zangu na dada zangu wapendwa, ni baraka iliyoje sisi sote tuliyonayo leo kuwa wa Kanisa la Yesu Kristo na kuwa na fursa ya kuhudumu katika Kanisa Lake. Hali zetu zinaweza kutofautiana, lakini sote tunaweza kuleta tofauti.

Wakumbukemarnotos, wafanyakazi wa chumvi; wanatumia vifaa rahisi kuvuna fuwele bora zaidi, chumvi bora zaidi. Sisi pia tunaweza kufanya mambo rahisi ambayo, kwa juhudi

acts, can deepen our discipleship and commitment to Jesus Christ. Here are four simple yet profound ways we can strive to be the salt of the earth:

Keeping the house of the Lord at the center of our devotion. Now that temples are closer than ever before, prioritizing regular worship in the house of the Lord will help us focus on what matters most and keep our lives centered in Christ. In the temple, we find the heart of our faith in Jesus Christ and the soul of our devotion to Him.

Being deliberate in our efforts to strengthen others by living the gospel together. We can strengthen our families through consistent and intentional efforts to bring gospel principles into our lives and to our homes.

Being willing to accept a calling and serving in the Church. Service in our local congregations allows us to support one another and grow together. While serving is not always convenient, it is always rewarding.

And finally, using digital communication tools with purpose. Today, digital communication tools allow us to connect as never before. Like most of you, I use these tools to connect with brothers and sisters in the Church and with my family and friends. As I connect with them, I feel closer to them; we can minister to each other in times of need when we cannot be physically present. These tools are undoubtedly a blessing, yet these very same tools can drag us away from the depth of meaningful interactions and eventually cause us to be pulled into habits that waste our time in less purposeful activities. Striving to be the salt of the earth includes so much more than an endless scrolling of reels on a six-inch (15 cm) screen.

As we keep the house of the Lord central in our lives, intentionally strengthen others by living the gospel, accept callings to serve, and use digital tools with purpose, we can preserve our spiritual vitality. Just as salt in its purest form has the power to enhance and preserve, so too does our faith in Jesus Christ when it is nourished and protected by our dedication to Christlike service and love.

As we remain bonded to the Lord, our

endelevu katika matendo madogo madogo na yenye maana, yanaweza kukuza uanafunzi wetu na msimamo kwa Yesu Kristo. Hapa ni njia nne rahisi lakini zenye nguvu tunazoweza kujitahidi kuwa “chumvi ya dunia”:

Kuiweka nyumba ya Bwana kuwa kiini cha kujitoa kwetu kwa dhati. Wakati huu ambapo mahekalu yapo karibu kuliko ilivyokuwa kabla, kuwekea kipaumbele kuabudu ndani ya nyumba ya Bwana kutatusaidia kufokasi kwenye kilicho muhimu zaidi na kuyakita maisha yetu katika Kristo. Ndani ya hekalu, tunapata umuhimu wa imani yetu katika Yesu Kristo na kiini cha kujitoa kwetu kwa dhati Kwake.

Kuwa na kusudi katika juhudi zetu za kuwaimarisha wengine kwa kuishi injili pamoja. Tunaweza kuziimarisha familia zetu kupitia juhudi endelevu na za makusudi za kuleta kanuni za injili ndani ya maisha yetu na nyumba zetu.

Kuwa radhi kukubali wito na kuhudumu katika Kanisa. Huduma katika mikusanyiko yetu huturuhusu kuungana mkono mmoja kwa mwingine na kukua pamoja. Wakati kuhudumu siyo daima rahisi, lakini daima huleta thawabu.

Na mwisho, kutumia mawasiliano ya kidijitali kwa lengo. Leo, vifaa vya mawasiliano ya kidijitali huturuhusu tuunganike kuliko ilivyowahi kuwa hapo kabla. Kama vile wengi wenu, ninatumia vifaa hivi kuunganika na akina kaka na akina dada katika kanisa na familia na marafiki zangu. Ninapounganika nao, ninahisi kuwa karibu nao; tunaweza kuhudumiana katika nyakati za uhitaji ambapo hatuwezi kuwepo kimwili. Vifaa hivi bila shaka ni baraka, lakini bado vifaa hivi vinaweza kutuvuta mbali kutoka kwenye kina cha michangamano yenye maana na hatimaye kutusababisha kuvutwa kwenye mazoea yanayopoteza muda wetu katika shughuli zisizo za maana. Kujitahidi kuwa chumvi ya dunia hujumuisha zaidi ya kupandisha mlolongo wa matukio kwenye skrini ya inchi 6 (sentimita 15).

Tunapoifanya nyumba ya Bwana kuwa kiini katika maisha yetu, kwa makusudi kuwaimarisha wengine kwa kuishi injili, kukubali miito ya kuhudumu, na kutumia vifaa vya kidijitali kwa lengo, tunaweza kuhifadhi uhai wetu wa kiroho. Kama vile chumvi katika hali yake ya usafi ilivyo na nguvu ya kuwezesha na kuhifadhi, ndivyo ilivyo imani yetu katika Yesu Kristo pale inapolishwa na kulindwa kwa kujitoa kwetu kwenye huduma na upendo kama wa Kristo.

Kadiri tunavyobaki tumeunganishwa kwa

lives will naturally reflect His light, and we will become the salt of the earth. In this effort, we not only enrich our lives but also strengthen our families and our communities. May we strive to maintain this bond with the Lord, never lose our savor, and be the small, little crystal of salt that the Lord wants us to be. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Bwana, maisha yetu kwa asili yataakisi nuru Yake, na tutakuwa chumvi ya dunia. Katika juhu-di hii, si tu tunayaimarisha maisha yetu wenyewe bali pia kuziimarisha familia zetu na jumuiya zetu. Na tujitahidi kuendeleza muunganiko huu na Bwana na kamwe tusipoteze ladha yetu, na tuwe chembe ndogondogo za chumvi ambazo Bwana anatutaka tuwe. Katika jina la Yesu Kristo, amina.