

You are the Salt of the Road!

by **Christopher D. Rodkey**

Genesis 19:15-26, Matthew 5:13-16

We hear the second part of Jesus' famous sermon on the mount, where Jesus claims that those who are listening to him-the poor and the oppressed-are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We have probably heard this before, and we know that the metaphor most often is drawn to that of food, that food tastes a lot better when it's salty. When food needs a little salt and you have none, the food suffers. The poor will know that they have finally tasted justice in the Kingdom of Heaven by the saltiness of its flavor.

As someone who has been recently diagnosed with hypertension, I want to avoid food references to salt for now, but instead I want to consider this analogy which Jesus makes-that "you are the salt of the earth"-to architecture. As some of you might know, there are five kinds of columns in classical architecture: the Tuscan, the Doric, the Ionic, the Corinthian, and the Composite. The Tuscan order of architecture, from where we get the Tuscan column, is simple, strong, and does not have any ornamentation. It does its job.

The Doric order of architecture, as symbolized by the Doric column, is based on proportions-balanced, well-structured, and relying well on its design. The Ionic column is strong and beautiful at the same time, combining the strength of the Doric-style column with the Corinthian. Some believe that these were the type of columns that were built around King Solomon's temple. The Ionic column is constructed by someone with a lot of skill and a lot of time to make it correctly.

The Corinthian order of architecture is slimmer than the Ionic column, but it is more beautiful than the Ionic. The most important aspect of the Corinthian column is its engravings, and it serves to inspire the imagination as much as it does to hold up a building. The Composite order of architecture is an offshoot of the Corinthian style, but it is fancier and emphasizes more curves in its ornamentation. For this reason, it is considered to be more feminine and was very popular for the construction of churches during the Renaissance.

When we think about these five pillars, we can see that they are all a little different and that they build off of each other. They are often more similar than different, but they come from different points in history and different geographical places.¹

I'd like us to consider that the roles we often take in church reflect these orders of architecture. Some of us are Tuscan, we are the industrious pillars. Those of us who are Tuscan do a lot of the work and aren't credited with much; it's often a thankless enterprise. I think of anyone who has worked in a church cemetery in this way, because few really know what is required to keep up a cemetery. Those of us who are Ionic columns have special skills that we use to help the church. Many of you are very gifted craftsmen or work in fabric arts, and your talents are literally all around us in the church.

Sometimes we take for granted how much work and skill goes into your contributions, but we often notice them.

Those of us who are Corinthian pillars have good imaginations and good visions for the future, and the church as a whole at this time in history is in desperate need of men and women who are willing to do the hard work of visioning and dreaming dreams.² Along with visioning for the future, Corinthian pillars inspire others to move toward that vision.

Finally, the Composites are the show-offs, but show-offs in a good way. The Composites do acts of justice, acts of charity, and good things in our community as a result of the spiritual food they have received from their faith. Composites inspire others to go and do good things outside of the church. Often Composites are the women and grandmothers—the true pillars of the church—who work hard and pray hard to raise their children to be moral adults. Sometimes the work of Composites is noticed and celebrated, and very often the hard work of Composites goes unnoticed, but the visible results are often in plain view.

Many of us can perhaps see ourselves in one of the five styles of columns or orders of architecture. But then I think about the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the pillar of salt that remained of Lot's wife for no other reason than looking back on the destruction behind her, even after God told her not to look back.

For so many of us, we aspire to be like the columns of the great orders of architecture: the Tuscan, the Doric, the Ionic, the Corinthian, and the Composite, all strong and inspiring with different gifts. At different points in our lives, when we are at our best, we are pillars of our communities, our families, our circles of friends, the church, or even better yet, we are pillars of the mystical Body of Christ. So often, the baggage that hangs around our necks, or the weight of the past, weighs us down like an anvil on our backs and prevents us from moving on in our lives and being the strong pillars that we are called to be. Instead we are constantly looking back at our past and events from the past and feel that we cannot escape them. Not only can we not escape the past, but we are burdened by it, and what's worse, we are sometimes punished by it. Often we are not pillars of our community, but instead we are little more than pillars of salt.

The good news is that Jesus speaks to all of us who are salty pillars. Jesus knows that history is written on the backs of those who suffer and who sacrifice the most, and that those people are Jesus' people. When Jesus says to his audience of the down-and-out, the downtrodden, the unemployed, and the oppressed that "you are the salt of the earth," Jesus is not just saying that you are essential to the world or that you are what makes the world a better place. Here Jesus is speaking not so much about your value as a commodity but that God understands what it means to be salty, what it means to be a pillar of salt in our world, run-down and down-and-out. The world might shame you, history might even tell false stories about you when you're gone, others may lie and back-stab you, but God is with us in our saltiness because God is shamed, and lied about, and eulogized falsely, and used for false witness for the wicked.

To walk the Christian walk is to live in this tension between being a pillar of the Body of Christ; strong and bold, with spiritual fruit and gifts and being a pillar of salt; honest, meek, and bogged down by the past. It is within this ambiguous gray area where we meet Jesus, for if we were strong pillars all of the time, we would learn to be too bold and too strong and thus misunderstand our boldness as a special kind of blessing over and against those who are down-and-out. If we were just pillars of salt all of the time, we would wallow in our shame and guilt, and never come out into the light where God calls us to be. We would just die of saltiness or hypertension.

We can only walk this path of tension between strength and saltiness with the help and witness of others, helping others when they need it and seeking help when we need it, building together the Body or Temple of Christ in the present. This is what I believe Jesus meant when he said that the Kingdom of God is near and at hand. I believe Jesus meant this when he said it, the Kingdom of God is in our hands when we join them together as a church and extend the hand of friendship, love, and charity.

The Reverend Sir Knight Dr. Christopher D. Rodkey, D.Min., Ph.D. is Pastor of St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Dallastown, Pennsylvania and Adjunct Professor at Pennsylvania State University, York Campus. He is a member of Hermit Commandery No. 24 in Lebanon, Pennsylvania and resides at 237 W. Main St., Dallastown, PA 17313. He can be contacted at cdrodkey@yahoo.com

Taken from the forthcoming book, *Too Good to Be True* by Christopher Rodkey, published by Christian Alternative, online at <http://www.christian-alternative.com/>. Used with permission.

Notes

1. Cf. Bernard Jones, *Freemason's Guide and Compendium*, new and rev. ed. (Exeter, England: Barnes & Noble, 1986) 19ff
2. Acts 2:17

[Top](#)

Update: July 12, 2014

Knight Templar Magazine Index - ARCHIVE of ARTICLES

HOME	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

[Top](#)