

Mark 9:30-50

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[0 : 0 0] And to be able to be encouraged by our time with one another. Take your Bibles, go with me, to the Gospel according to Mark.! Mark chapter 9. We're finishing up the 9th chapter of Mark. Mark chapter 9.

Where we left off a couple weeks ago was verse 30. So we'll be picking up in verse 30, going to the end of the chapter, which gets us to verse 50. At first glance, it seems as if these passages do not go together.

It seems like it is kind of a combination of a couple of different accounts or differing accounts. Hopefully by the time we are through, you will understand how they fit with one another. I think there are some good bookends to kind of show us what Christ is doing here at one moment.

But we are in Mark 9, verses 30 through 50. If you're physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God. Starting in verse 30 there.

It says, From there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and he did not want anyone to know about it. For he was teaching his disciples and telling them, The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him.

[1 : 0 6] And when he has been killed, he will rise three days later. But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask him. They came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house, he began to question them, What were you discussing on the way?

But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. Sitting down, he called the twelve and said to them, If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.

Taking a child, he set him before them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, Whoever receives one child like this in my name receives me. And whoever receives me does not receive me, but him who sent me.

John said to him, Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us. But Jesus said, Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in my name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of me.

For he who is not against us is for us. For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as a follower of Christ, Truly, I say to you, he will not lose his reward.

[2 : 1 8] Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea.

If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than having your two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than having your two feet to be cast into hell, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into hell, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good. But if the salt becomes unsalted, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another.

[3 : 17] Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this day. We praise you for the opportunity of gathering together. We thank you for this place that you have provided for us. But we praise you that we can open up the word of God and to read it and to hear it with one another.

And we pray now, Father, as we have read your word and we have seen your word, that by the power and presence of your spirit, that you would speak to every heart and mind. We ask that you give us ears to hear, minds to understand, and hearts to accept and to apply the truths that are contained therein.

And Lord Jesus, may you be glorified through it. And we ask it all in your sweet and precious name. Amen. You may be seated. Immediately before this, we find a couple of magnificent events which happened during the ministry of Christ, one being the Mount of Transfiguration in which Peter, James, and John are taken upon the Mount with him.

And while they're on the Mount, they see the glory of God radiate from within Christ, not upon him as the face of Moses shone when the Shekinah glory radiated upon him, but rather it came from within him.

That is, the veil of his humanity was pulled back for just a moment so that those that were gathered with him there would see who he is in his true personhood. They saw with him Moses and Elijah.

[4 : 40] Peter, trying to justify their reasoning for being there, spoke abruptly very quickly about building three tabernacles, and then they heard the very voice of God that said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

Listen to him. That was a revelation that would stay with them until the end of their life. Peter refers to it in the book of 2 Peter. John refers to it in the book of 1 John.

It is something that resonates the reality of who Christ is. But before they came down the mountain, Jesus told them not to tell anyone about it until after his death.

They didn't have a lot of time to process that fact because when they got to the bottom of the mountain, they encountered a crowd, scribes arguing with the disciples that were left behind.

There was great discussion going on and trying to get to the bottom of it, Jesus asked what they were arguing about, and a gentleman came forward whose son was possessed by a demon. And he said, I told your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.

[5 : 41] And we saw the reality that what Christ was doing there was dealing not only with the faithlessness of the Father, but also the faithlessness of the disciples, that he was beginning to reveal himself more and more.

In the public ministry of Christ, which is confined just about three and a half years, we can date that through the Passover events in which he celebrates, we know that about the first half of that is the revelation of who he is, the manifestation that he is Emmanuel, God with us.

Not only through his great teaching, he's teaching as one with authority, not as one who had been taught. He is not constantly quoting scribes and teachers of the past, but rather he is expounding the law because he is the law giver.

Even at the age of 12, he amazes the teachers in the temple. So not only in the manner in which he taught, but also in the manner in which he lived. He was a perfect, sinless life that was exhibited on public display.

Also, in the fulfillment of prophetic word, deaf hear, the blind see, the lame walk, the dead are raised. Everything which he declared the disciples of John the Baptist to go recall back to John the Baptist of who he is.

[6 : 57] He is the long expected Messiah. So for about the first half of his public ministry, he is validating why he has come. And then we enter what some call the quiet years.

The years that seem to go by without much public teaching, without great miraculous events, though we do know the miraculous were always taking place among him. And these were years of preparing those whom he would leave behind because he had called them to himself so that they may see along with the crowds.

And they were gathered around him so that he could give them instructions in parables such as the parable of the soils. And he could disclose the truths to them. But he was constantly pointing towards.

John gives us a great transition when we read the Gospel of John. It tells us that he set his face towards Jerusalem. It's really telling when you read the Gospel of John that when Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem, it tells us that the disciples were amazed at how he went.

They were in amazement at just the intentionality that he carried with him as he was going to his death. But those were not a wasted journey because on that trip, he was preparing his disciples for his departure and their usefulness.

[8 : 21] In John 14, 15, and 16, we have the longest private discourse of Christ recorded for us. It starts in the 13th chapter where we have Satan, because the time was at hand, and now that the hour had come, Satan entered Judas Iscariot, who would betray him.

Jesus washes the disciples' feet, and then Jesus begins to teach them in John 14, 15, and 16, and even John 17 is the high priestly prayer. But at that time, Jesus is telling them that when he leaves, it would be of their benefit, for the Spirit will come, and the Spirit will empower them, and the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit will make their abode with them, and they will be used by him.

They will be instruments and vessels for his glory. And he is preparing them to be used for their calling, their purpose, which, by the way, my friend, is our calling and purpose.

That they were to make the glories of Christ known. We refer to it as the church, and Peter refers to it as being the living stones of the tabernacle, being built up, joined to one another to proclaim his glory and his worthiness to a watching world.

But here in the passage before us, as Christ has taken time now and is beginning to prepare them, he shows us what it looks like to be a cleansed vessel of service.

[9 : 48] What do we need to focus on to be a cleansed vessel of service? This teaching is not reserved for the multitudes. This is not for the crowds. Rather, this is a private time of instruction, an intentional time of instruction for those who are closest to Christ.

And he deals with some things, rather pointedly, things that, if we're just going to be quite honest and bring the application down, things that must be dealt with within the church, so to say, because the church was gathered with him there in his disciples, so that that group of people could be a cleansed vessel of service.

Number one, we see the ambition that hinders us. The ambition that hinders us. It tells us there in verse 30, from there they went out and began to go through Galilee.

That is, he is making his way to Jerusalem, as John would point it, because he is in the northern portion of the land of Israel. He comes to Capernaum, which is on the seashore of the Sea of Galilee.

He will eventually make his way through Samaria and enter into Judea, and then there he is going into Jerusalem. But he is beginning to make his way. His face is set. His time is at hand.

[11 : 09] He knows the divine timetable. Most of his miraculous deeds happened in the Galilean region, and he is about to leave the Galilean region for the last time. But this time it is different, because they're making their way through it, and it says, and he did not want anyone to know about it.

Now that had to be hard to do, for it was in the Galilean region that the 5,000 were fed. More than likely, the number is actually about 15,000 to 20,000 people when you count women and children that were gathered with him.

It is also in the Galilean region in which the 4,000 were fed. So the crowds were known. It was in the Galilean region in which everyone would hear he would come, and they were bringing people, all the sick and the lame and the demon-possessed, to him so that they may touch the hem of his garment or they may be into his presence.

It is in that northern region that most of the demonic people had been cured and healed. But at this time, Jesus didn't want anyone to know about it. Now don't lose sight of that reality.

It's not because he's wanting to exclude the crowd. It's because Jesus, in his sovereignty, is seeking a time of intentional instruction. He says, Now is the time for preparing my followers for what is about to take place.

[12 : 24] We have, really, the glorious opportunity to look in, if you will, because the word of God is the spirit of God moving the men of God to write the word of God so that we may understand exactly what is going on.

Mark would have known about this from hearing Peter preach and discuss this with him. And Mark tells us that Jesus takes this time away from the crowds because it says, As they were going, it says in verse 31, For he was teaching his disciples.

And he was teaching them something very pointed. Jesus didn't hide behind any wall or veil with his disciples.

He was very real. This is one of the things I love about the Lord God Almighty is that God is a revelation God. He is a God that reveals truth. He does not hide, but rather he makes known his ways.

Look at what it says. The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill him. And when he has been killed, he will rise three days later. That's pretty straightforward.

[13 : 35] He tells them elsewhere that when he goes to Jerusalem, this is going to happen. He's taking some time. Now let's just set it up for us. Apart from the crowds where his disciples alone are with him.

And as they are going, that should remind you of the book of Deuteronomy, right? He is teaching them along the way. The Deuteronomy 4 and Deuteronomy 6 principles. As you go and as you're making your way, he is fulfilling everything in the law and he is teaching them some very intentional pointed realities.

Hey, when we get there, men will take a hold of me and they will kill me, but on the third day I will rise again. That's pretty simple. That's pretty straightforward. Now for those of you that know your Bibles and I hope you know your scriptures, let your mind fast forward until that night and see how surprised they are when all of a sudden men grab a hold of him.

See how dismayed they are when he dies and see how beside themselves they are in the upper room because they cannot understand why all of their hope and all of their ambitions were upon this man and now he is dead.

And even how astounded they are on the third day when Mary shows up and said, we went to the tomb and it's empty. What's even more telling is he had told these people it would happen?

[14 : 50] He had told them multiple times. But the question we must ask ourselves, why didn't they get it?

What was it that hindered their reception of this clear truth? For one, it probably made no sense to them whatsoever that the Messiah would die.

They had failed to see the suffering Savior recorded for us in the book of Isaiah. They had failed to see all the prophetic ministers. They'd seen the riding on the donkey and Hosanna and blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

But they haven't seen him who is marred beyond recognition. The one who was led away as a lamb to slaughter but yet he didn't say anything recorded for us all throughout the prophetic works of the Old Testament.

They had only saw, we call that selective seeing, they had only seen what they wanted to see. And yet Jesus is trying to prepare them but there's something within them. There's nothing external. All the external hindrances have been removed.

[15 : 50] The crowds are not there. They're along the way. They're walking along dusty trails and on their way. There's no phones in their pockets going on. There's no distractions. There's nothing else. It's just them and Christ and Christ is teaching us very plain truth and yet they cannot get it.

Why? Well the answer to that is found in the very next paragraph where it says and when they came to Capernaum Jesus asked them what they had been discussing with one another. By the way, the bookends you find are the one another's here.

What were you talking about with one another? And then in verse 50 it says you can live at peace with one another, right? Because they were at odds with one another on the way but if they do the number of things that he expounds for us here then they can be at peace with one another.

There's your two bookends to tell us this passage is all one great teaching. But what we understand here is along the way Jesus is saying what? Hey, we're going to go to Jerusalem. I'm going to be handed over to some men.

Those men are going to kill me but on the third day I'm going to rise again. That's what Jesus is teaching them along the way. But here's the question. What had they been discussing along the way? If Jesus had just told you you know when we get to Jerusalem I'm going to be handed over to men and they're going to kill me but on the third day I would rise again.

[16 : 59] I would like to think that along the way I would be looking at whoever's walking beside me. That doesn't make any sense to me. Does that make sense to you? What does he mean by resurrection? I've never seen that. I mean I know we've seen Lazarus come out but what is he talking about?

That's maybe what I would have been discussing at least on the super spiritual side of Billy Joe likes to think about that but then the fleshly side of Billy Joe goes no I would probably be doing the very same thing they were doing.

What were they discussing? And no one wanted to answer them it says because along the way they had been discussing which one of them was greatest in the kingdom. See along the way they had been discussing personal concerns.

Hey that's the king we've seen it. I mean he's feeding the multitudes he's walking on the water he's raising the dead there's no one like Jesus. Who do you think is going to be second to him? Who do you think is going to be the greatest in the kingdom among us?

I mean I know there are 12 of us. Thomas you're doubting all the time. Peter you're speaking all the time. James and John you're the sons of thunder wanting to call condemnation down all the time. We don't know about Judas Iscariot he's just carrying the money box and then we have a couple of zealots we have Levi the tax collector surely he won't be the greatest but who's going to be the greatest?

[18 : 12] And the one ambition they had was not to understand what Christ was teaching them but where they would be personally. And the focus was on self.

For the entire time that Jesus had removed every distraction every hindrance every obstacle the one thing that still remained was the hindrance that was within.

It was the ambition of self-promotion and self-concern. What about me? We find that still a little bit resilient in Peter's life even after the resurrection.

The gospel of John tells us that after the resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples and he appeared to them one last time when Peter decided he would go back fishing you remember that and Peter being the leader of men that he is the others said well we'll go fishing with you they didn't catch anything because fishing without Christ is useless and toilsome.

Jesus shows up on the shore he tells them to cast them down on the other side they do they catch an abundance of fish it tells us in the gospel of John exactly how many fish it gives us down to the number the exact number this wondrous catch of fish and Peter immediately recognizes that's Christ he runs out of the boat doesn't even dress he's still unclothed he's just got his loincloth on he runs he had been stripped for work and he meets him on the shore you remember Jesus cooks him breakfast and he asks Peter three times Peter do you love me you remember this restorative process you remember exactly what happened after that after he restores Peter he says Peter when you were young you went where you wanted to when you were older others will lead you where you don't want to go and he was speaking of the reality of Peter's death and Peter would be crucified Peter ends up being crucified but he does not want to die in the same manner that his Lord dies so Peter dies upside down he's crucified upside down which speeds up to death process that's what church history tells us but do you remember what Peter's great question was what about him and he points to John John never names himself but John says that's the apostle who wrote this what about him what's going to happen to him and that's when Jesus says if I will that he lives until I return again what's that to you Peter and John says that's why everybody says this apostle will never die that's where the legend

[20 : 29] John even tells us where the legend came to be but anyway we're getting ahead of ourselves this whole ambition of self concern is something that is very innate within us but friend listen to me if we're not careful that ambition will also hinder us from understanding exactly what Christ is trying to teach us it is the ambition that hinders us what about me what about him and we need to come to the point where and I speak to myself here that it's what about Christ what is it he is trying to teach me not where am I going to be how will I fit into the kingdom and I've said it and I know I've repeated it time and time again I have to come to the place where I am content I believe we we did ourselves a great disservice and by we I mean believers when we began to focus so much on mansions and golden streets and things of that nature and said yes I can't wait until I get my mansion and I remember as a new believer

Lord really began to break me over that reality and I know that there are many dwelling places in heaven and I know that the King James Version has it that he is building many mansions for us and I know that some of you can't wait to see your mansion and I don't want to bust any bubbles here but I am perfectly content to live in a broom closet and be the street sweeper in the kingdom of heaven if that's what he calls me to be because it's not about where I'm at it's not about what I'm doing it's about who's there and that was something I had to learn and I had to learn it in probably one of the most unpleasant ways of church work and that is my wife and I cleaned the church for a number of years and then when I became pastor she continued to clean the church and so scrubbing church toilets and all that good stuff I learned hey sweeping streets of gold has got to be better than this and I'm content with that God had his way in me my first job in the church after being a believer was to help my wife vacuum the floors and clean the toilets and that's probably where he taught me more than anything it's okay we have to learn these lessons because ambition will hinder us if we're not careful number two we see the ambition that hinders this is a touchy one it is the attitude that embitters us there is an attitude that must be cleansed from believers because if we're not careful it will embitter us towards those around us church history is resplendent with this and we see that there are multiple multiple occurrences of this maybe even in our own lives and it is the very next transition by the way when Jesus confronts them he says that he who wants to be first needs to be last needs to be the servant of all and then he puts a child in his lap and says you must receive one like this in my name in the Aramaic slave or servant and child is the same word so he's giving them a picture a word picture here right if you want to be great be like this be like this this is what greatness is it is simplicity it is easy and then John says okay well I can be a slave

I can be a servant I can serve others and we like to think of John I have to kind of do this and it is because there's some great paintings throughout the ages that have painted John with such a feminine face and angelic look and it's not that he's the one who leaned upon the Savior's bosom I understand that but we like to think of John kind of for lack of a better way kind of a girly man right we like to think of him a little bit soft but remember Jesus calls him and his brother the sons of thunder right there's some strength to John there's some strength and some reality to him and we see a picture of this here John said to him teacher and here's the second thing is the attitude teacher we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to prevent him why for he is not following us did you notice it we tried to prevent him for he was not following us and it is an attitude of having arrived and an attitude of elitism if you will of saying if he is not with us that is if he's not walking the same path I am if he's not in the same vein that I am if he's not one of the 12 or even one of the 70 if he's not one of the 120 that are gathered in the upper room he needs to get out of town and not do this anymore it is there is but one way and it's our way and it is an attitude we have to be careful with because the focus and I know on the surface it sounds good stay with me here because I believe doctrine matters

I believe doctrine is absolutely important as a matter of fact I stake my life upon doctrine what we call big rock issues the things that really matter right the things that are of utmost importance we'll take some time and we'll go through those as a church at some point and we'll work our way through major doctrines but the doctrines all point not to who we are but who he is but John here is saying we wanted to prevent him because he wasn't with us and so John grouped himself together with being I'm on the end crowd I'm the one who's got it figured out and if he's not part of the 120 or part of the 70 that are commissioned and sent out or part of the 12 that are commissioned and sent out that man needs to stop what he's doing contrast that by the way with what Paul said when Paul was sitting in a prison cell Paul says that some because I'm imprisoned here are mocking me and making fun of me and ridiculing me others are getting bold and they're preaching

Christ he said but either way Christ is being spoke about so I glory in that reality Paul says I don't care if they're proclaiming the name of Christ is they're saying oh there's that man who preaches Christ let's see what Jesus does with him or if they're emboldened because of my faith in Christ and they're preaching Christ he said as long as Christ's name be magnified why because that is a totally different attitude than if they're not for us they're against us Jesus says don't stop him don't stop him why because there is none now look at the focus of Christ here there is none who will cast out demons in my name and soon thereafter be able to speak bad of me the focus there is what do they say about me now there are some major concerns that I have with some quote unquote churches there are some major concerns I have with things that are labeled Christian in today's culture in today's time there are some things that I think need to be worked out and there are some things that I think need to be kind of formed and fashioned

[27 : 30] I try not to be very dogmatic and to stand up here and proclaim those things as long as Christ's name is magnified and glorified now in personal discipleship if I see an individual walking in a way in a manner in which it is not worthy then I will take that individual and say hey let me show you a better way let me show you how to properly understand Christ let me show you how to properly understand him think much as we see so many of these people doing in scripture that some would hear of Christ and they would have a partial understanding of Christ and they would be preaching a part of Christ but not really in the proper way we see it you know in the book of Acts but they call him aside and say wait a minute let us show you a better way they don't publicly ridicule them and publicly make a mockery out of them why because it is not about who we are I don't ever want to be one who stands up and say hey we have got it all figured out and everyone beside us is wrong I don't ever want to be that because that is an attitude that will embitter me against other people that I am fairly certain I will be surprised when

I see them standing beside me in glory and that is what we call a pharisaic attitude if they're not with us then they're wrong I've experienced that in my own life I've been told that I was wrong because I wasn't part of a certain camp I've been told I was wrong because I did things in a certain way and I've been told I was wrong in some of my practices I've had some pharisaic attitudes given to me unfortunately I'm afraid that I have been kind of pharisaic at times but if we're not careful that attitude will embitter us towards everyone that we come into contact with if they're not like us hey I see it I don't mind calling it this because we're a part of it I see it even in the Southern Baptist Convention I've witnessed it first hand and I'll say that because we're a part of it not as I'm judging it from the outside and at times it can just be despicable!

now doctrine matters but every one of the faith and messages that you read historically every one of the major creeds and doctrines friend listen to me have been penned by men every one of them this is the word of God now I believe some of those creeds and some of those doctrines and those faiths and confessions they are absolutely important but they are man's best effort to understand the word of God and I know I'm 20 years into pulpit ministry and I know there are things I've yet to understand Adrian Rogers used to say don't read a single commentary don't read a commentary set a complete commentary set written by a single man

Adrian Rogers said because no man knows the Bible that well find the books that man knows that he studied that he knows it good and he understands it he had his exceptions he said I got this one this one I can trust them but he said be careful because it's still the best effort and attempt of men or women to understand the word of God so we need to be careful with our attitudes now if they are doing something that is openly wrong sure we can confess it and declare it for the glory of Christ not for the security of who we are if we are not careful that is the attitude that will embitter us number three we see the accountability that challenges us there's an accountability that challenges us it's a smooth transition as we go from verse 41 into verse 42 one sentence really whoever causes one of these little ones again that child is still there whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble here's the accountability whoever whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble it would be better for him if with a heavy millstone hung!

around his neck he had been cast accountability what Christ is saying is this innocent childlike faith which is resting in belief upon me if you live your life in such a way in such a manner that you cause this one to stumble it'd be better if a millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into sea that's a Roman torture not a Jewish torture!

[32 : 23] remember he is trying to cleanse the vessels for service rather than just to lift them up and push them into the world to ability he says your greatest concern is not whether that individual is casting out demons but your greatest concern is am I living in such a manner and in such a way that even the simplest of faith is not hindered by the actions I take I very clearly remember I was 21 years old I just accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior right before my 21st birthday I probably wasn't a six month old believer and our neighbor at the time who now happens to be the preaching pastor at Normandy was attending church and I am ashamed to say I was such a new believer I didn't even know if they were attending church somewhere he ended up coming pastoring there he preaching there but anyway our neighbor at the time he said hey do you want to go to a revival service with us and

I said oh yeah sure that would be great our kids were the same age as our kids and we were he and his wife and me and my wife went to this service and it was a church in more county I can't remember!

some backwoods church there and this evangelist was in there and I remember I was a six month old believer and he was preaching and he really made me mad really confronted me and upset me with some things maybe wasn't the same kind of teaching and he made this comment he said are you the reason someone is not coming to faith in Jesus Christ and my doctrine was so true I here's the pharisaic attitude I had my doctrine is so true is I believe in the sovereignty of God so much even then at that age that if Christ wills them to be saved he will lead them and he will call them and he will dwell them and how can I ever hinder the work of Christ that was my attitude I hope you see the Phariseeism in that I left there going how dare he say that boy the Lord beat me up for a couple of weeks over that and then one day I realized it also says that Christ draws them but he draws them through our witness and our testimony and what if I am the one that's hindering them what if I am the one that's hindering them and I remember the moment I was like!

it could be me and for a number of years it was me I lived in such a manner that I was an front to the name of Christ and it is what D.

O. Moody would say are the two wings of a bird you have the sovereignty of God and the free will of man and without one the bird flies in a circle the man is responsible for his actions that we do bear some responsibility and there is the accountability that how we live among even the simplest of faith absolutely matters and we don't want to be the one who hinders them for that is of great consequence fourth and finally we'll be through not only in the passage do you see ambition that hinders and attitude that embitters and accountability that challenges fourth and finally you see the action that purifies my mentor in the faith ended up being dean of admissions at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College immediately after

[35 : 49] I really began to sense that the Lord was calling me to preach he and his wife moved away and he was dean of admissions at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pikeville Kentucky if you know where it is that's pretty telling because it is really a hole in the wall you have to go through the tunnel you end up in coal mining country and there you are while he was dean of admissions there he told me I used to call and talk to him we'd have multiple hour conversations on the phone because I was still working out my doctrine and theology and the best way to work it out was to talk to someone and he told me one time he said brother Billy Joe I have a student up here that came from another country I said wow he said yeah he showed up and he has one hand I said man that's amazing he goes no what's even more amazing is the reason he has one hand is because he cut it off so what he said well see in his former life he was a thief when he came to Christ he read this passage that we're about to read and he realized his hand was causing him to stumble so he put his hand on a block of wood and cut it off he says the only person

I've ever seen take that passage literally I said wow now I would never be able to preach this passage the way that pastor could preach it now I do not think also that Christ was being literal and telling you to literally cut your hand your foot or your eye out but what he is doing is he is using a vivid picture to show us the great extent we are to go to to avoid such things he says if your hand causes you to stumble cut it off if your foot causes you to stumble cut it off if your or blind in one eye than to be cast into hell where their worm does not die and fire is not quenched by the way it's the last verse in the book of Isaiah where their worm does not die and fire is not quenched do you notice the there there is the possessive there it's not the t-h-e-r-e it is t-h-e-i-r it is their worm does not die and their fire is not quenched the ones who are condemned to such a place he said it is better to live with such a manner and to be so extreme in our understanding of the full consequences of sin that you would be willing to take drastic actions in our day of acceptance and looking over such manners and saying well that's just the way it is

Christ says no you are called to take actions which would purify you you say pastor are you saying that I am to work out my own salvation well yes not to work for your salvation but to work out your salvation Paul says that once we are saved and redeemed we work out our salvation with fear and trembling that is the salvation that he has put within us now is a muscle which must be exercised it must be utilized and therefore we are to do it with fear and trembling in such a manner that we take great actions to ensure that we are living in the way that he has called us to that we understand the weight and the consequences of sin now I believe that once an individual has accepted Christ truly as their Lord and Savior then they are sealed until the day of redemption from would indeed be concerned about the actions of their lives we could not be those who truly accept

Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and continue to live as if we never have because the reality scripture teaches us is that in Christ we are 100% clean but the actions of our lives ought to reflect that as well we ought to live in such a manner externally that it is a picture of what has happened to us internally and if there is something that is causing us not to exhibit that externally then we ought to cut it off because there's the accountability is I don't want to be one to cause someone else to stumble so well that's their that's their faith well here Christ is telling us it's our!

responsibility! And we ought to take the actions that would purify us for his service and it's not enough to say well I've accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior now I'll live however I want to Christ tells those whom he has separated here to teach to be prepared to be used for his service it absolutely matters how you live are you going to stumble sure every one of them stumble after this teaching is there restoration absolutely Christ is merciful and gracious and kind and restores us for his service but does that excuse us no!

[40 : 59] the things that we can do we must do because he has empowered us to do it tells us in the book of Hebrews that we are not tempted in any way that we cannot resist it because he that is within us has already resisted those temptations so it's up to us the author of Hebrews says you have not yet resisted until the point of blood!

so why complain it hasn't costed you dearly yet still we must understand the weight of this why because it says for everyone will be salted with fire for salt is good and that's what he's called the believers to do to be those who preserve society those who bring a little flavor to society but if the salt becomes unsalty in our day and time we have purified not salt we we know that they did not then but if it became useless it wasn't good for anything what a picture he says have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another why because you have cleansed yourself to be a vessel for service for the glory of the king let's pray father we thank you for the day we thank you for your faithfulness and goodness towards us we thank you for the day which you have given us lord we admit your word challenges us it calls us to a level that on our own we could never attain calls us to a standard that is so high that it would be impossible for man by his own efforts to reach lord we know that your ultimate cause that you call us to yourselves this teaching is for those who were with you so lord those of us who know you as our lord and savior and we surrendered our lives may we be reminded that in that surrender you also empower us to live as you called us to live may we say yes lord we will do so for the glory of the we ask all in christ's name amen