

Avoiding Hell at All Costs

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[0 : 0 0] announcements one time and I'd never heard your story but I wanted you to come up and kind of share the whole thing kind of officially. You know we're going to be studying the Bible this morning but a lot of times people won't open up the Bible but they'll listen to your story right about how you came to the knowledge of of the Savior and so we're going to hear Roger's story this morning. Good morning. The Thursday morning Bible study is at game time Jeff Jordan's camp and so it's seven o'clock and a pretty big crowd from Champaign County. It's about halfway between Springfield and Urbana or maybe a third of the way something like that. It's closer to Springfield in Urbana so just wanted to make that note. So my life changed on April 14th 1989.

I don't know where to call it the second most important bend in my life but I'll talk about that a little later but it was a life or death thing. I was kind of feeling bad.

I we had we had actually loaded soybeans and cleaned out a grain bin that morning dad and I and so I had a little patch of an old farm lot barn lot that I wanted to go plow so I had to moldboard plow on and I was plowing it and I just got to feeling worse and worse so I got off the tractor set down on a log that was there and lit a cigarette not knowing that my winter maker had just plugged up and I sat there and thought what am I going to do I had we had the FM radios in the tractor at that time but nobody would answer me and of course I didn't have a cell phone then so I walked up to the house and Deanna was there and she was there because I was disturbing the 4-H calf in the barn so she stayed to kind of keep an eye on the calf until I was done. I knocked on the door and I said lady I think I'm having a heart attack and I laid down on the ground and then the elephant got on my chest and wouldn't let me breathe and I was always strong world at 36 wheeled if something if I wanted to do something I just did it if it didn't want to come if I wanted to lift it I just grunted a little harder and it happened I thought I was going to live forever and but that elephant made me want to die to get away from that pain just couldn't breathe and so that changed my life that

I didn't know it at the time but that was a big thing so they took me to the hospital and I don't know if anybody's ever rode in one of them ton ambulances with dual wheels but it is awful and anyways they were trying to get an IV in me they're supposed to do that before they leave and they couldn't get it done. Got to the hospital and Dr. Salim Dada he was my heart doctor until he passed away almost and they used striptokinase that was when it first came out and that's a clot buster and that probably saved me from having a lot more damage than I did and the funny thing about that was I had my coveralls on and while I was on the table they asked me if they wanted to cut them if they could cut them off to get to my chest because I had already died and revived me and soybeans rolled out I don't know anybody know what a soybean is but the nurse come up to my wife and said one of these little round things they thought maybe it was a drug or something like that but anyway that was kind of a funny thing so got home I forget how many days I spent in the hospital so weak I couldn't believe it if anybody's been to my place there's a little pump house halfway between the house and the barn and the first time I tried to walk to the barn I had to stop at the stump and sat there for a little bit and just thought my life was over and I don't know what happened but I finally said if I'm going to die I'm going to die doing something so I started walking with a gun and shoot ground hogs and I had a hill down at Fairborn I called it cardiac hill and it took me forever to get up to it but by the end of the summer I could walk clear up the thing feeling pretty good and I can still remember my wife and I can still remember my wife she was always hanging on to my arm saying you can't do that you can't do that and I just drug her along and she finally realized that that was what was going to happen around 1992 I went to a grain marketing seminar Dr. Robert Ligon he was a I guess you call it an old school theologian type Robert Thiem maybe some of you have heard that name before but he pretty much he was a hard nosed guy you know basically kill them all and let God sort them out don't you know if they do something wrong he's just I don't know what they call it but I thought I needed his advice on grain marketing which it was a it is tough to do that because of all the I call them external forces on the grain market that shouldn't be there but he got up one Sunday morning I took my mom with me I always took somebody Susan sometimes but mom wanted to go to St. Louis so we went there he got up on and he was talking and he all of a sudden he went listen you're either for Jesus or you're against him and I can't believe that Eric and fart he he made me think and I went home and I was working on a little tractor in the garage uh tuning it up or something and just listening just thinking about what he had said and and other things and and I said to myself at that time he's right you've got to make a choice and it was still another two years before we landed at Grace Bible Church and uh started hearing the gospel message as it's supposed to be presented and I remember arguing with Dave Weinbrenner and Paul Pontus about can I work my way to heaven or pay or something like that

why did why did why did he have to do everything and I can't do nothing it didn't seem right for a farmer that's used to doing everything by himself but uh they said it don't work that way Roger well later on that year we went to a Christmas play pray play I talk about as good as Ron Ganondon I'm glad you did that Kings and them people with all them funny names because I had no way I was going to do it I was just going to say read that name but uh anyways uh we got here and we went to that Christmas play that uh that fall and it was a basically an overview of the Bible and Jesus and what he did and I wasn't paying a whole lot of attention until he got to the garden and he sat there and he prayed for that cup of wrath to pass by him and that's when he nailed me I knew he'd done that for me and I can't help thinking 2,000 years ago plus whatever it was when he was hanging on that cross looking forward to the people that was going to receive him and believe on him if my face showed up while he was on that cross just uh like I say I just never wanted

[8 : 22] I always wanted to pay my way and get something done and be fair about it but it don't work with Jesus Christ let's see got that done anybody ever watched the TV series Bones with Celie and uh temperance well believe it or not Thursday night he's on uh the air channel on Thursday Thursdays and Saturdays and this young guy from England was uh helping temperance the uh she's an atheist was an atheist and Basile is a uh is supposed to be a Christian Catholic Christian and the interaction between them two people made the show and also some of the other uh co-stars just so much funny at some times and other times real serious but uh this this kid got shot from a sniper that uh

Celie knew he was a sniper in the army and uh he was laying there dying the guy shot him right through the heart and he kept saying don't let me leave and uh afterwards uh the atheist and the Christian had a discussion about it and the atheist asked Celie he says what did he mean don't let me leave don't let me leave and Celie said he was talking to God that he wanted to stay he was young and he wanted to continue the work there it's fascinating what them people do with them bones but uh and uh she couldn't understand that what that meant but but I do understand that from 1989 because I was going straight to hell it was my name would have been blotted out of the of the book of life at that moment but Jesus had other plans I've got a dear friend in Florida that's uh slowly losing his mind or whatever you want to call it and uh

I've tried to witness to him he had a dear friend that was into Scientology and gave all his money away and died broke and that turned Chris off something off awful and I just was never to crack that guy and if you knew Chris he's one of the guys that led a good life and didn't have to try he was just born and raised that way and uh but I'm going to try to go down and visit him and hopefully get the message through but it may be too late and I I regret that one of my big regrets along with not spending enough time with my kids but uh anyways so Ron Gannon would you come up here I'm going to show you I'm going to huh I'm not going to talk no I'm going to show you how I witness I've learned this from Bill Fay and uh as it stands

I met Ron somewhere and uh we were talking and then all of a sudden I changed it and says uh do you have any spiritual beliefs oh yeah sure yeah I go to church once in a while Christmas Easter yeah this is a Christian nation isn't it yeah okay when you die do you think you'll go to heaven oh I hope so yeah I mean isn't that where we all felt okay if what you believed was wrong would you want to know no okay at that point the conversation is over you might hand him a tract and uh it's just over if he would have said yes I'd have went to the scriptures and showed him what was going on thank you Ron okay you are saved though I didn't know where he could act like a heathen or not so anyways so

I was at the Champaign County Fair this year and while Susan was playing with the kids and the games and everything I would talk to the adult and uh witness to them something along this line and uh one of the last persons I saw that before the fair was over I asked him that question because he was saying he was a good person and he thought he'd be in heaven you know and when I said if what you believed was wrong would you want to know and he thought a little bit and he said no so handed him a tract and went on but uh so anyways that's what had happened and now with a world that is so ignorant of the Bible I mean most people don't go to church they certainly don't read the Bible maybe what once or twice a year they go and uh so Ken Ham always says you've got to start in the beginning and I'm

[13 : 43] I almost feel like you have to do that today when you you have to show that there's a creator God he created everything and he created you and your womb and then you can get into the scriptures I mean into the saving into Paul's gospels and go from there and uh I just I don't know can you I have a hard time believing in God that's going to send people to hell forever and ever because he simply didn't believe but that's what he says and just think about that when you when you have people that you love and you don't want to go to hell and won't listen to you keep praying for them because somebody may be somewhere or if they get into a situation like I did when I had that heart attack I knew my life was changed and I wasn't going to live forever and so I was I was more receptive to what the

Bible said at that time so witnessing to somebody is the easiest and the hardest thing to do I have a lot more easier time witnessing to somebody I don't know but when you got dear friends that know you and knew my former life it's just hard to crack that Steve Ball was here he's got a brother that we've been working on and because of Steve he had probably maybe a more wildlife than I did growing up and he says I can't reach him and I talked to Sammy and he just he doesn't want to listen so and then Joel McGarvey told me something was it last we had a family Bible clamp that he has at the end of his season going around evangelizing he says that at the end of the mystery program when we're taking it out of here he thinks

God will send those people that have heard the grace message a strong delusion and they won't be able to be saved of course unless the two witnesses and all that because they rejected it in this program so think about that when you when you see people that you love or even somebody on the street just think about that is that possible we don't know but that's what Joel told me he thought that they would be sent a strong delusion and not want to hear and I don't know what happens to the grace gospel and the tribulation it just doesn't seem like that there's no other better choice you know but the Jews have got to go through their torment and be refined and a remnant saved out of that so I guess that's about it unless there's a question or something thank you thank you thank you well thank you

Roger you know everyone in the whole world all of us are part of that ultimate statistic right 10 out of 10 people die and none of us can escape that but a lot of times when we're younger especially right we feel invincible sometimes it takes something like like your ticker having some problems or maybe something else dramatic happening in your life to realize wow this life is actually very fleeting and to ask the question where am I at with God how am I doing am I going to heaven is there a place called hell there's a lot at stake and a lot of people don't know where to look to for the answers but here in this book are the answers the words of eternal life we're going to look today at a passage we're in the book of Mark if you've got your

Bible open up to the book of Mark and as I was studying for this looking at the passage we're going to look at today I was thinking how in the world am I going to do this in 30 minutes so I decided it's going to take at least two hours so everybody just settle in here I'll actually split this up into two parts here but it's a difficult passage one because I think there's some difficulties in understanding it but the other is the heavy subject matter Jesus talks about hell and hell is a heavy thing it's interesting to note that of all the passages about hell in the Bible the vast majority of them come from the mouth of Jesus I would say nine out of ten even eight out of ten at least of the passages about hell come from the mouth of Jesus and here is quite an illustrative one one that really is stark in its description as we go through this

[19 : 51] I'm going to give a quick overview we're going to read through the passage there's a few things I'd like us to pay close attention to Jesus is going to be talking about little ones and we want to pay attention to what is he talking about with little ones he's going to be talking about offenses or stumbling well what does that mean we're going to look at that and then we're going to look at connecting words as we read through the bible sometimes it can be difficult to understand well which parts are connected and which parts are disconnected sometimes you're actually reading through the bible and there might be a hundred years between one verse and another sometimes it's a week between one verse and another sometimes it's a year a month it can be all kinds of different things and so sometimes that can be difficult but there are clues a lot of times it will tell us if there's any confusion we'll look at that but also it's important to look at the context whenever we're reading these passages whenever we're reading the bible and you know especially when we're looking at the gospels the life of Jesus Jesus is the savior of the world he's the most important person in all of the bible so as we read the words of Jesus we want to give them a lot of weight but we shouldn't make the mistake to think that well the words that Jesus spoke the ones in red a lot of our bibles we have the words in red which is neat but a lot of the other words in the bible even in the old testament those are the words of Jesus too Jesus is as John says the word made flesh he is the word of God himself many of the things that Jesus spoke are universal truths that are applicable to us at all times that we can you know whether you're an old testament a person in the old testament or an old person or a person in the new testament or a person today these are universal truths that apply but there are also many things that Jesus spoke that were relevant most relevant and sometimes only relevant to the people that he was speaking to at that time so we're going to try to pay close attention to the context really this week I'm going to focus on what was Jesus talking about in this passage to his disciples in that day and age and then next week we're going to take a look well what can we take from this passage for ourselves today in the time in which we live and really bring it home and apply it to ourselves so let's read Mark not Matthew chapter 9 we're going to start in verse 38 and go through to the end of the chapter now Jesus answered him saying teacher we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in your name and we forbade him because he does not follow us but Jesus said do not forbid him for no one who works a miracle in my name can soon afterward speak evil of me for he who is not against us is on our side for whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in my name because you belong to Christ assuredly I say to you he will by no means lose his reward but whoever causes one of these little ones who believes in me to stumble it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea if your hand causes you to sin cut it off it's better for you to enter into life maimed rather than having two hands to go to hell into the fire that shall never be quenched where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched and if your foot causes you to sin cut it off it's better for you to enter life lame than rather having two feet to be

cast into hell into the fire that shall does not die and the fire is not quenched and if your eye causes you to sin pluck it out it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched for everyone will be seasoned with fire and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt salt is good but if the salt loses its flavor how will you season it have salt in yourselves and have peace with one another so that's our passage here there's some this is kind of a dramatic passage but let's just go back real quickly and consider the context we talked about this the last couple of weeks Jesus is having a private conversation with his disciples there was some talk on the kingdom that

Jesus is about to establish sometime soon who's going to be the greatest of his twelve disciples will it be Peter will it be John will it be Andrew will it be Philip who's going to be the greatest in the kingdom Jesus sat them down and talked to them about the importance of not looking to be great at least not now he said that time will come but today in this time you need to focus on being meek on being humble on being lowly because when the kingdom comes the first shall be last and the last shall be first the ones who uplifted themselves when it comes to the kingdom they're going to be the ones that will be brought low but those who lowered themselves who humbled themselves during this time this important time when the kingdom arrives they'll be lifted up he actually brought in if you remember a child from the household as an example of a person who was lowly somebody who didn't have a lot of authority a lot of dignity and so let's keep that in mind as we kind of go through here now verse by verse this is the setting this is the situation

Jesus had just talked to them about the first shall be last and the last shall be first now John answered him saying teacher we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in your name and we forbade him because he does not follow us so they had seen someone and we're not sure exactly at what time they had seen someone I can imagine remember that Jesus sent out his disciples two by two to do ministry throughout the villages of the area so it's very possible that they're talking about during this time when they're doing their missionary effort they saw someone and he was also casting out demons just as they were in the name of Jesus and they're wondering here it doesn't seem he's not one of our followers he's not following us he's not one of the twelve maybe he's not even one of the seventy and we told them well you shouldn't be doing that Jesus didn't give you the authority to do that this is probably someone who's familiar with the ministry of

Jesus he is casting out demons in Jesus name he likely to Jewish people who would cast out demons Jesus mentions that just briefly and we actually see that also a little bit in the book of Acts but this isn't somebody doing this in the name of Moses or even in the name of Jehovah they're actually doing this in the name of Jesus and I would think that if I was in that same position I would think well this guy he's off the tracks he's not authorized to do this right and so hey don't be messing around with this but Jesus is answering his response is interesting he says do not forbid him don't stop him from doing that for no one who works a miracle in my name can soon afterwards speak evil of me Jesus really acknowledges this as a true miracle this isn't somebody just making things up it's actually accomplishing something miraculous and he says he doesn't say that somebody who does a miracle like this can never speak evil of me but he's simply saying listen if somebody's doing something like this in my name then it's not likely that they're just going to turn around and curse me in the next breath it's not impossible that somebody might do something for

[28 : 55] Jesus and then later on do something against him in fact we have a very stark example of that in the Bible and one of Jesus disciples Judas who was out with the other twelve apostles disciples doing miracles and then later on turned on Jesus Christ but Jesus finishes up with this and he says for who is not against us is on our side and I don't think this is something that is to be taken as a universal truth as anybody who is not opposed to Christianity for example is just on our side because really that's not not really the case but in the context here what I think Jesus is saying is in our work of the ministry as we are getting out the news the good news that the kingdom is coming to Israel and we're doing miracles preaching the kingdom telling people to turn telling the

Jewish people specifically to turn back to God that we need to be in a posture of war there is a battle that is coming and it's already here and when you're in a battle it's important to know who your friends are and who are your enemies whose friend and who is a foe Jesus is trying to communicate this man is not our enemy he's not our foe now remember that Jesus had warned his disciples about some people who were the enemy who they might confuse as friends the scribes the Pharisees the Herodians Jesus warns his disciples be careful with these guys they quote scripture but they are not your friend and so this is really

Jesus sharing with his disciples in this battle that we're fighting that we're just getting started and it's going to get worse and we'll talk about that in a minute things are going to get really heated it's important that you recognize who is friend who is foe who's on our side and who is against us in these next two verses Jesus provides two examples of friend and foe and foe verse 41 for whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in my name for whoever gives a cup of water previously whoever is not against us is on our side so he gives an example here of a person he says whoever he's talking about someone like this man that they saw out on the road and even he even brings it down he says that person was casting out a demon in my name hey that's a pretty great thing but he says hey listen if you find someone who even does something as simple as just giving a cup of cold water in my name

I want to let you know that they will receive a reward for that they'll receive a reward we'll talk again in a little minute about what kind of reward is he talking about but then he gives a second example verse 42 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea the first question I want to ask as we look at that one is who are the little one that Jesus is speaking of one of these little ones and I think it's very common when people look at this verse to think well Jesus is talking about young people or children or maybe immature believers it's especially easy to think that because if we remember the context

Jesus has either on his lap or right in front of him a young child but that's not what Jesus is referring to here in fact I think the better way to phrase this at least in our English the English of our day would probably to say instead of little one to say a least one a least one we actually see that word translated sometimes that way when it comes to the phrase the least of these Jesus talks about the least of these but that word little actually doesn't necessarily mean small as in size but actually small as in rank or position in life and I think that's what he's getting at here he's talking about his disciples those who have lowered themselves in Luke chapter 12 verse 31 Jesus refers to his disciples and he calls them my little flock my little flock it's that same word he's not saying you guys are so cute that's not what he's saying he's saying that you are you're my humble flock you're low in dignity the world doesn't think much of you

[34 : 51] I think much of you but the world does not you don't have a lot of high rank and stature you are my little flock and he says the rest of that verse for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom remember that Jesus had said who is it that was going to inherit the earth said it was the meek not the high and mighty ones but the meek would inherit the earth the other question is well what does he mean to cause to stumble what's that all about well that word in Greek is actually this word scandalizo what does that make you think of in English so a scandal right scandalize and that's actually a good maybe synonym that we could use it's sometimes translated offended in fact that word is repeated over and over in this passage a little bit lower it's actually translated to cause to sin even though the word doesn't necessarily mean to cause to sin but it means to be a stumbling block to cause offense sometimes in a good way sometimes in a bad way it doesn't necessarily mean cause to sin because the

Bible actually says over and over that Jesus is the stumbling block it's not that he's causing people to sin but he provides an opportunity for people to do something with him and some people pass him by or even worse they decide that they're going to persecute him they're going to be the ones that take him out to I think another word instead of scandalize is to trip up so think of a rock it can cause you to get tripped up this word to stumble is used all throughout Jesus gospel and it's a common warning that Jesus gives he says offenses are coming there are things that will cause stumbling and I need you disciples to know that these things are coming so that you will not stumble you won't fall in

Matthew chapter 13 verse 20 this is a passage from the parable of the sower or as some people call it the parable of the soils and Jesus talks about the different kinds of soils and remember that there was one there was a stony soil had stones in it and he says this but he who receives the seed on stony places this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy this is somebody who receives the words from Jesus yet he has no root in himself but endures for just a little while but when tribulation or persecution arise because of the word immediately he stumbles that same word he gets tripped up scandalized if you will Jesus is preparing his disciples and all those who are willing to listen to him about what's coming and that some you need to be sure that you are rooted and grounded in your commitment to him because when tribulation or persecution come there will be a temptation to fall away in

John 16 1 Jesus says this these things I have spoken to you that you should not be made to stumble they will put you out of the synagogue yes the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers service to God they're going to come after you they're going to try to kill you and for some of you they will be successful but I need you to John chapter 6 verse 60 in which there are some who we watch in real time as we're reading through the Bible who are stumbling who are offended who fall away it says therefore many of his disciples when they heard this Jesus was saying something difficult and they said this is a hard saying who can understand it when Jesus knew in himself that his disciples complained about this he said to them does this offend you that same word does this cause you to stumble does this scandalize you does this trip you up and a few verses later verse 36 it says from that time many of his disciples they went back and walked with him no more they tripped them up what

Jesus said tripped them up and they decided I'm walking away from this dude what he says is too hard it's too complicated whatever too offensive I'm out of here remember what Peter said Jesus asked his disciples what about you guys are you going to walk away too and Peter said for all the other twelve he said where are we going to go who else has the words of life and boy is that an important message that everybody needs to hear there are a lot of offensive things in the Bible plenty of things to offend anybody about sin about judgment about hell about all kinds of different things things but only Jesus offers eternal life so we could choose to be offended we could lay our lives down at his feet and put all of our faith and trust in him in

[41 : 07] Mark chapter 14 this is a little bit later from where we're reading now this is we're in chapter 9 this is Mark chapter 14 Jesus gives a warning right before he is arrested it says then Jesus Mark 14 27 then Jesus said to them all of you will be made to stumble because of me this night that same word you'll be made to stumble because of me this night for it is written I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered but after I have been raised I will go before you to Galilee and Peter said to him even if all are made to stumble I will not be remember Peter famously said that and then did he follow through he didn't but wasn't God gracious to him wasn't Jesus gracious to him even though he did stumble just for a little bit if you'll notice in this passage and I guess we didn't turn there and because of all the passages we he of hosts strike the shepherd who's the shepherd

Jesus strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered and then it says on it continues on that's that's all that Jesus quoted but it continues on then I will turn my hand against the little ones isn't that interesting that same phrase little ones comes up again that shall come to pass in all the land says the Lord that two thirds in it shall be cut off and die but one third shall be left in it I will bring the one third through the fire will refine them as silver is refined and test them as gold is tested they will call on my name and I will answer them and I will say this is my people and each one will say the Lord is my God foretold about a day that was coming in which Israel God's people would go through a time of intense testing he uses the imagery of a fire a refiner's fire not just a fire in your fireplace but the kind of fire you use to purify gold and silver and intense heat today we call that the tribulation this is the time still to come in which

God will test his people the Jews he's going to put them through this fire as a way to refine them Malachi also uses the same language in talking about this future day Malachi chapter 3 verse 2 says this but who can endure the day of his coming and who can stand when he appears for he is like a refiner's launderer's soap he will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver he will purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness this is part of God's plan for Israel that there's been so much unfaithfulness in Israel he's saying there's going to be a time in which I'm going to refine there's going to be an intense fiery tribulation that will come and some people will come through okay and others will not but it will be a test to see who's going to come through we're going to continue on here in

Mark and it could be it's possible that well are these verses related to the ones before it or are they completely distinct and as I first read this I couldn't really tell but I think after reading through this and looking at this more closely it's very much linked to what he was saying before because what he's doing is he's been warning them about external temptations from others to sin there will be some who will cause the little ones to sin there were some who will actually come alongside the little ones and help them out give them a cup of cold water now he's going to warn about not just external temptations but those that come from inside of us and he talks about our hands and our feet and our eyes being a cause for sin that when he uses that phrase cause you to sin it's that same word scandalize it's going to trip you up your own sin will trip you up and it's important don't get tripped up this is too important in fact he makes clear what is on the line entering the kingdom or being cast into hell entering into eternal life or going into the fire that burns forever there is a reward and in this passage we'll see in two different places he has three examples and the wording is a little bit different on what the reward is and he mentions two things one is to enter into life and the other is to enter into the kingdom this this is a kingdom that's coming in which

Jesus will reign on the earth for a thousand years what the prophets had prophesied for many thousands of years that the Messiah was coming and that he would establish a kingdom on the earth with Israel at the center and Jesus on the throne and he also talks about the punishment some may ask and some people have taken what Jesus said here very literally Jesus uses very dramatic language if your hand causes you to sin what do you do do you give it a slap cut it off it's very dramatic if your eye causes you to sin what do you do gouge it out and is Jesus being very literal well I think some people have taken this literally there are people especially though if you actually go to a mental institution this verse actually comes up quite a bit but I think there's a lot of reason why we shouldn't take it literally how do we know well for one thing do we think that if you removed your hands and your feet and your eyes that you wouldn't be able to sin anymore probably not right especially

[48 : 33] Jesus is talking about one hand right one of your hand because I think he says left hand left eye whatever if you remove one hand does that mean you can't sin anymore nope you've got the other one the other thing to ask is well because why this is metaphorical does your hand cause you to sin no in fact Jesus speaks explicitly to say that where does Jesus say sin comes from does it come from our hands does it come from our eyes does it come from our feet no Jesus says it comes out of your heart is where sin comes from and that sin in our heart makes its way to our hands and to our feet to our eyes we do things that we should not do feet that are swift to shedding innocent blood the Old Testament speaks of hands that can do all kinds of things eyes that can look upon things that they should not be looking on but the sin comes from our heart and then the third reason

I think why we should take this metaphorically is he mentions going into eternal life without your hand or without your feet or without your eye and I don't think we should think that at all God is going to restore all of our bodies we'll have those who go into eternal life will have new bodies and they'll be completely whole but Jesus is saying these things for a reason and he's using I think metaphor but also hyperbole to make it very very clear the message is your soul your eternity your eternal soul that part of you that will live on forever is so much more important than any body part and we value our hands don't we I mean what would we do if we had no hands and there are some people who live without hands and boy do they wish that they had hands we don't have feet some people have lost their feet and makes life so much more difficult and then our eyesight we would never give those things up yet how many people take such good care of their hands such good care of their eyes going to the doctor making sure even just a little cut you put a band-aid on it soothe it put the ointment on will neglect their eternal soul god forbid that any should do that Jesus talks about a coming judgment and I think the the context here in which Jesus is speaking and we're actually going to talk next week about how we can apply what Jesus is saying here to us in what we call many times the age of grace where God has offered a way of grace to the gentiles in which you don't have to keep the law of Moses you don't have to do all these things you don't even have to go through a tribulation but God has offered grace in which all we have to do is trust in what Jesus did on the cross and we can live forever but in this context that's not what is being offered to his disciples saying here listen something is coming and it's already here and you need to endure through the whole thing

Matthew Matthew 25 which is part of what people call the Olivet discourse because he said this on the Olivet mountain and he talked about what's coming in the end and this is just a portion of that but here's what it says Matthew 25 31 when the son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him then he will sit on the throne of his glory Jesus will come he will sit on a throne in Jerusalem to rule over the earth but before that happens this is what it will start with verse 32 all the nations will be gathered before him all the nations not just Israel but all the nations and he will set the sheep on his right hand but the goats on the left then the king will say to those on his right hand come you blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world for I was hungry and you gave me food

I was thirsty and you gave me drink I was a stranger and you took me in I was naked you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you drink when did we see you a stranger and take you in or naked and clothe you or when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you and the king Jesus will answer and say to them assuredly I say to you in as much as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren to who to children because a lot of times this is what this passage is interpreted at children or just people in the world no Jesus is saying to the extent that you did this to one of my disciples who I have trained to go throughout and preach the gospel of the kingdom and the whole world turned against them but you were willing to stand with them to help them in their time of need you will by no means lose your reward because you didn't just do it for them you did it for me then he will also say to those on the left hand depart from me you cursed into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels for

I was hungry and you gave me no food I was thirsty and you gave me no drink I was a stranger and you did not take me in naked and you did not clothe me sick and in prison and you did not visit me then they will answer him and say Lord when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you then he will answer them saying assuredly I say to you in as much as you did not do it to one of the least of these little ones you did not do it to me and these will go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous into eternal life this is a description of after this tribulation period this time of intense fire and we know as we read through the book of revelation and we don't have time to get into all the details of that but there an antichrist will arise and a false prophet and what's going to happen in what it's described at Jesus actually describes it this way he say it will be worse it will be more intense than at any time in the history of the world it will be so bad but during this time the whole world will turn against the faithful

[56 : 17] Jewish people the whole world and there will be an opportunity will you join with the rest of the world to be an aid to my evangelists to the Jewish people who are faithful who are preaching the coming kingdom will you join the world in coming against them and persecuting them or maybe even just ignoring them it's not my problem because the day is coming in which there will be a judgment this isn't the final judgment that Jesus is talking about that comes later the final judgment of the whole earth this is a judgment right after the tribulation in which during that period you will be judged did you do what you were supposed to did you join the world against my people and against me and those who did something as simple as giving a cup of cold water to one of

Jesus disciples who are preaching his kingdom they will find that they will gain entrance into the kingdom and this doesn't just apply to Jews this actually applies remember the whole nations will stand before him and there will be a division of the sheep and the goats we'll finish up with the last two verses and we'll talk a next week for everyone will be seasoned with fire again this is in Mark 9 49 for everyone will be seasoned with fire and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt there's a as as I was reading some commentaries about this there's a guy named Albert Barnes he's wrote a commentary in the whole Bible here's what he had to say perhaps no passage in the New Testament has given more perplexity I've got the task of trying to figure out what he's talking about here but

I think what he's talking about is that refiner's fire for everyone will be seasoned with fire there's a time coming in which this tribulation will come upon the whole earth and that's what's happening that's what's coming and then he says every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt and this is actually an allusion that's the illusion but here I think he's talking about his own disciples you're about to go through a fire your life will be a sacrifice for me for the kingdom for Israel you're going to be persecuted and every sacrifice must be seasoned with salt and what is salt salt is a preservative and he finishes with this he says salt is good but if the salt loses its flavor how will you season it have salt in yourselves and have peace with one another he's saying hey listen you are going to be like a sacrifice from the law of

Moses you're going to go through a fire but you need this salt to preserve you because without salt the sacrifice the meat will spoil and you can't spoil you have to persevere through the whole thing even to giving up your life that's what Jesus had taught his disciples in Mark chapter 13 verse 13 Jesus is talking about the tribulation this period the seven year period he says and you will be hated by all men for my namesake but he who endures to the end will be saved you need to be salty you can't fall away before we get to the end you gotta persevere to the end and that's what I think Jesus is talking about here so to kind of summarize this is all about the tribulation that's coming and it really has already kind of started up there will be persecution and suffering and death and he's talking to his meek and lowly disciples who have told to make themselves low that they need to recognize who their friends and their enemies are because there's a danger you don't want to be led astray you don't want people to lead you to stumble not only that but you need to be careful about your own sinful desires things that come out of your heart that cause your hands and your feet and your eyes to commit sinful things because judgment will come at the end of this period and those who are faithful and endure to the end will receive a reward but those who don't will be cast into hell what does this mean for us we're not

Jews and there's different views on what's going to happen in the end times so there are some people that think that believers today will go through the tribulation there's some people that think we'll go through halfway and then we'll be raptured up we teach that we'll be raptured the church the body of Christ will be raptured up into heaven be caught up into heaven before all this happens and there's others who believe that we're going to go through it but for us what does this mean Jesus his context here is specifically about what was going to happen with Israel so does God plan for us to go through the tribulation and does our eternal life depend on the degree to which we lower ourselves or does our eternal life depend on whether we can endure through suffering and tribulation does our eternal life depend on whether we can resist sin are there eternal rewards for us to earn and is hell also a danger in our day in our context so as we're going through the book of

[62 : 43] Mark we're making distinctions between what is for the Jew and what is for us today the Bible calls us the body of Christ and it actually refers to us as like Gentiles but there's both Jew and Gentile in Christ today right but God did this thing where he offered a kingdom to the Jews and they rejected it so the Bible says he cut them off for a season not forever but for a season and today he's working with a group of people who calls the Gentiles the non-Jews and he's giving them something special the good news of the grace of God in which anybody can come to him they don't have to do the law of Moses they don't have to do all these other things to get it that Jesus said was required for the kingdom all they have to do is look to Jesus and trust that what he did on the cross is sufficient for me and I can live forever even if sometimes

I fail even if sometimes I'm tripped up but we'll talk about more more on that next week same bad time same bad channel let's pray father thank you for your word these heavy words that you spoke but we we we can't just pass the heavy things by think about things and not think about things that are uncomfortable we need to address them directly and look to you for eternal life I ask father if there's anybody in this room who has not made that decision to trust you with their eternal soul that you would work in their hearts even this morning that they need to do something with you they can't just pass you by they can't just live their life and pretend that it's going to go on forever I ask you to work in hearts today if there's anyone here who has not made that decision thank you for the eternal life that you offered through

Jesus may may we live up to in our Christian lives what you have accomplished already for us in Jesus name amen