

## 8.16.15

### O. Intro:

Recently a minister opened an ecumenical meeting with this....“Greetings to you in the name of Yahweh the Almighty, in the name of Allah the beneficent and merciful. Greetings to you in the name of the Eternal One who gave the Buddha his great enlightenment, and in the name of the Hindu’s Supreme Being that orders the cosmos.”

\*I don't say that so that we would mock this person, or become offended.

\*I give you that so that we could evaluate it with our feet planted firmly in on the ground of reality.

\*I assume this person had good motives but did he have good thinking?

\*No one who takes seriously any of the faith traditions alluded to in this greeting believes that God can be all of these things at the same time.

\*So this minister in trying to be inclusive; effectively excluded everyone who takes their faith seriously.

\*Except perhaps for those who irrationally believes that God can be one thing and not that thing at the same time.

\*Francis Schaeffer had a book called "Escape from Reason".

\*It certainly describes our times...escape from reason is an attempt to live irrational lives, lives that are self-contradictory.

\*A manifestation of this "escape from reason" is seen by the fact that right now the worst thing possible is to miss truth but to be "on the wrong side of history."

\*Then History is redefined as the present rather than the past.

\*Rallying cry of the 60's radicals was "Don't trust anyone over 30"

-Thomas Oden's wise reply was "Don't trust anyone under 300."

\*Now the re-cycled cry is "If its not new its not true."

\*This is often manifested in what a PBS Frontline program called "Chasing Cool"

-Cool is subjective, ever shifting...history is what is currently considered "cool" "in vogue"

\*This means that all we do is recycle what is old and already tried and already failed and put it in new packaging with new terminology.

\*Now none of this should be surprising; we know from Scripture and history that cultures (collections of people) that become wise in their own eyes will become fools...and cultures will always become wise in their own eyes.

\*What is surprising and tragic is that the church is often chasing the culture that is chasing the cool.

\*It is sometimes behind the world and always struggling to catch up...rather than out in front leading people to the eternal.

\*This is evident in the number of Christian organizations that have recently had a change in doctrinal conviction that came immediately after a supreme court decision...the timing is suspicious.

\*Schaeffer used to say that an idea, belief, trend will start with a philosopher (academia, writer, poet),...flow into general culture...then after everyone else is about to move on to something new...the church will pick it up and adopt it as theirs.

\*Like the not so cool teenager who is always one step behind the ever changing high school cool...by the time he has caught to the right hair, clothes, shoes, language, music...cool has moved on...leaving them perpetually "uncool"

\*There are two ways to actually be cool in most high schools:

a. Actually be "in" with the right crowd (and value what they value).

b. Be unconcerned with being in...not pretending to be unconcerned, but to actually not care.

\*Then you are not only your own cool and you are an existential threat to the crowd cool.

\*This unconcern, however must flow from security in who you are...it can't be faked.

\*It is a unique teenager...who is confident in who they are, what they believe, what they want, what they don't want.

\*They have a confidence that is distinct from localized, temporary ideas and values.

\*This is supposed to be the church...Simone Weil...said "**that only someone in touch with the eternal can hope to be eternally relevant and faithful too.**"

\*We cannot hope to change culture if we are addicted to it...chasing after it.

\*But of course we cannot change culture if we are aloof, detached, disconnected from it.

**\*The three general approaches to culture that church has taken:**

1. Out of the world (Christ above)
2. Of the world (Christ below)
3. In but not of (Christ in)

\*It is usually easier to take a pole position...I'm against all of it, I'm okay with all of it.

\*Rather than an engaged (with both God and culture) response.

\*A response that takes both culture and truth seriously...yet refuses to chase the culture because we take seriously our responsibility to be salt and light in culture.

\*Here in the second half of Mark, Jesus is prepping his disciples for his journey to the cross and for their coming roles in changing the world.

\*He is showing them and teaching them what it means to be orientated to eternal truth and how to escape the gravitational pull of the ideas of culture that are widely believed, ever changing...and wrong.

\*He is going to twice in this passage mention one of the most offensive and maligned of all Christian beliefs...Hell.

\*This is a somber and sobering topic.

\*It is a topic that brings great emotion.

\*In recent polls the vast majority of people believe in heaven of some sort and that they will go there, while about 1 percent of people who believe in hell believe they will go there.

\*A variety of solutions have been put forth to take God off the hook on this topic of hell:

1. Annihilation: At the final judgment God will cease to hold the unrighteous in existence.

\*This is held by some sincere, Bible believing Christians...like John Stott

2. Universalism: In the end all will be redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ.

\*There are variations on this: Some will go straight to heaven, some will see the light after some probationary after death period of time.

3. Hell is Outdated:

\*Hell was a view that was held by the unenlightened but cannot be held any longer by civilized people. People who believe in a God of Love.

\*As if they are the first in history to believe in a God of love.

\***Key:** The most important question is in life, is always...what is real...not what is most appealing, or least distressing for me or what makes the most sense to me.

\*In theology and any other field of study, engineering, medicine, you name it...nothing matters more than a basic commitment to allowing the facts to take you where they lead.

\*The foundation for all folly is "What do I want to be true?"

-This has caused disaster for military leaders, nations, families, and individuals.

-I've seen this with my own eyes more than once.

\*The foundation for wisdom is "What is true and how to do I align myself with it?"

\*In our postmodern world facts are flexible things...we shape them as we choose.

\*If I don't like something or want it to be true...then I am not responsible to deal with reality as it is...I can make my own, a world that I want to live in.

\*This works for awhile...until it doesn't

\*Let's say a man has dreamed of becoming a fish.

\*He finds that with practice he can stay underwater for increasing lengths of time...2 minutes and a bit more.

\*So for a short time as he is underwater he comes to believe has created his own reality...he dreamed of being a fish, and look...he is living the life of a fish.

\*Then his brain cries out for reality, his lungs ache for air...and he will surface into the real world and live...or he will die underwater dreaming of being a fish...yet however much he wants it to be true, people are not fish, never will be fish.

\*No amount of "believing in yourself" will grow gills.

\*This crash of reality can take years...but it will always occur.

\*What is most important is to find out what is real and align with that reality.

\*So, hell is not culturally acceptable, but it never has been.

\*We can wish it were not real, but we should most want to know if it is real.

\*And if it is real we should want to know how to actually avoid it rather than "assuming our good motives will suffice."

\*It is not something we should ever think or talk flippantly about...to me that is a terrible wrong.

\*It is not something we should ever go beyond what is written...no speculating.

\*It is interesting that even though many struggle with the idea of hell, if you asked them where would you put Hitler if there is no hell?...they certainly don't want him in heaven.

\*It is a tough subject.

\*Let's read Mark 9

**Mark 9:38 “Teacher,” said John, “we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.” 39 “Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, 40 for whoever is not against us is for us. 41 I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward. 42 “And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck. 43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off.**

**It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. 47 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 than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where ““their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’**

**49 Everyone will be salted with fire. 50 “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”**

\*John was shutting down this outsider who was helping people in the name of Jesus.

\*Evidently John was proud of his actions, because he assumed Jesus would concur...look at how he reports to Jesus and then seems to wait for a pat on the back.

\*There are a couple of things in the background here:

a. They had recently failed in their attempts to deal with a demoniac... yet this interloper was having success.

b. They had recently been arguing about who among them was the greatest...here this outsider, a guy who was not part of the club...was clearly besting them all.

\*Jesus did not affirm John but refuted him.

\*"No don't stop him, if he is not against us he is for us."

\*This guy clearly had faith; he was successfully dealing with demons in the name of Jesus.

\*We have already seen what happened when the guys tried to deal with the enemy in their own power...they were powerless.

\*In Acts 19 there were some men who tried to cast out demons with a formula instead of a faith...."In the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches..."

\*The demons responded with "yea, we know of Paul and we certainly know Jesus...but who are you"

\*The demoniac pummeled these fellows, injuring them...they were playing with things that are not toys.

\*Jesus is saying this man has faith as revealed by his actions...he is one of us.

\*Then he goes even farther...

**41 I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.**

\*Look guys, its not just the big stuff that reveals faith...not just casting out demons.

\*Even when a person reveals his or her faith by giving a cup of water in my name...that is equally significant.

\*He is saying "What matters is the question of faith in me...am I the foundation for these actions?"

\*The over arching theme of this passage is...The kingdom of God is the most important thing in any life.

\*Faith in Christ is what matters most...this faith will show up in our lives.

\*From something as dramatic as casting out demons to something as small as giving a cup of water in the name of Jesus.

\*But he is going to make his point even clearer by using some negative examples:

\*"Fellows this faith in me is so important in human lives that if someone caused one of my children to get off track it would better for them to drown."

\*"Little ones here" is not the word for physical children...but refers to "His children"  
-The ones who are trying to follow Jesus.

\*Sin here is a word for "lead astray" rather than the traditional word for sin that means "miss the mark"

\*So, the willful actions that are designed to lead God's people away from Gods will and ways are very, very bad...

\*People who teach, write, act in ways that cause God's people to stumble...are in a dangerous situation.

\*In fact the individuals who participate in these activities would be better off in the sea with a large stone tied to their neck.

\*Now being in the ocean with a large millstone (weighed up to 1500 pounds) around your neck is clearly a distressing scenario...the Lord was making a dramatic point.

\*Its no small thing to being a part of leading people away from life in the Kingdom...life in the Kingdom is the whole point of life itself.

\*Then Jesus goes on a roll...

**43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. 47 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 than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where “their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’**

\*This is hyperbole...a way of speaking for emphasis.

\*He is not advocating self-amputation as a solution for anything of a spiritual nature.

\*There were people in history who tried to "cure" themselves of sin by self-amputation ...obviously it didn't work.

\*Hands and feet and eyes don't independently commit sins...they do as they are told by our will.

- \*If your hand sins it's because you told it to...hands don't actually sin, we sin.
- \*Imagine the murder's defense..."Your honor I didn't kill that man, my hand did...it held the knife...so put my (left) hand in prison for life not me."
- \*If you lost both hands...you would not lose your ability to sin...sin originates in the heart.
- \*He uses this dramatic language to make a powerful point...the importance of the Kingdom over and against all other things of lesser importance.
- \*Lesser includes here the very things that are most important to us in our physical bodies...hands, feet and eyes.
- \*It would be better to lose these than to lose the Kingdom.
- \*It is here in this context that Jesus mentions hell.
- \*The opposite of life in his kingdom is hell.
- \*Escaping hell(entering his Kingdom) would be worth losing all that is considered most valuable now.
- \*Jesus said it like this in Matthew "What good would it do to gain the whole world and lose your soul."
- \*This is a contrast in values...setting humans straight on what matters most...because often, we just don't know.
- \*Guess who talks about hell more than anyone else in the NT...?
- \*Yep, Jesus.
- \*I think that fact alone would be shocking to most people in our culture.
- \*They have some affection for at least a tolerance for Jesus...but it is Jesus who taught us the most about hell.
- \*The word translated "hell" here is gehenna.
- \*It was the name of a valley outside of Jerusalem that for centuries was used as a trash dump.
- \*Trash burned there in a perpetual fire, animal carcasses rotted there and were consumed by worms.
- \*It was a nasty place.
- \*It became a metaphor for eternal punishment...the wicked will reside forever in the great trash dump...a place of fire, smoke, worms.

\*So Jesus uses this common word "gehenna" that his hearers would have understood, in order to make his comparison and contrast.

\*It would be better for this to happen than for that to happen.

\*Better to lose hands, feet, eyes...than die and miss the kingdom...enter the eternal trash dump.

\*Gehenna is translated "hell" because for us...because hell is the word that for us describes a reality apart from God.

\*But there are many images that arise in minds when people hear the word "hell" that are not accurate.

\*Devils with pitchforks for instance...when in fact this is not a place Satan wants to go, it is a place prepared for him that he does not want to visit...he will not rule there, no one does.

\*Let's talk a bit more about this difficult topic of hell: using some great minds who have written about it.

\*In *The Problem of Pain*, C.S. wrote:

“The damned are, in one sense, successful, rebels to the end; the doors of hell are locked on the inside. . . . They enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded, and are therefore self-enslaved.”

\*John Piper wrote:

\*Heaven and hell are places defined, respectively, by God's presence or absence, by God's grace or wrath. Whose we are, not where we are, determines our misery or our joy. To transport a man from hell to heaven would bring him no joy unless he had a transformed relationship with God, a regenerating work that can be done only by the Holy Spirit. To the person sealed forever in righteousness, God will remain wondrous; to the one sealed forever in sin, God will remain dreadful. If we reject the best gift that a holy and gracious God can offer us, purchased with his blood, what remains, in the end, will be nothing but hell.

\*Dallas Willard wrote:

“A part of our problem with understanding hell comes from the way we think about heaven. We think about heaven as some kind of comfortable resort, but *the greatest thing about heaven is going to be the presence of God*. He has allowed us to avoid him here on earth in some measure if we want to, but if you go to heaven, God's the biggest thing on the horizon. You're no longer going to be able to avoid him. And that would be the supreme torture if you haven't gotten over thinking of *yourself* as God. That's why I sometimes say that the fires of heaven burn hotter than the fires of hell.”

\*A person who refused to respond to the draw of God now would not suddenly love God enough to want to live in his presence after death...

\*Lewis famous quote...there are two kinds of people in the end:

\* "Those who say to God 'Thy will be done' and those to whom God says 'Thy will be done.'"

\*In Romans Paul uses this language..."God gave them over to their own sin."



\*They got what they demanded...no God.

\*The well-known practical atheist verse in Psalms says...

**\*Psa. 14:1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.**

\*This is more of a "No...God!" than it is a "There is no God."

\*Very few at that time were actual atheists...they believed in a variety of gods of their own design.

\*They were practical atheists...living lives in opposition to the will and ways of the true God.

\*So...their response of..."NO, God!"

\*Brings God's response of "Okay..."

\*Not out of pettiness, or having his feelings hurt...

\*But rather out of respect for his own will and ways...he will not force love.

\*Let's finish the passage for this morning.

**49 Everyone will be salted with fire. 50 "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other."**

\*This verse has proven to be difficult to understand...there are more than a dozen interpretations in different commentaries.

\*My own conviction regarding these passages where is not much consensus among people who take the Bible seriously is not that God intended for us to be confused but he intended for us to contemplate...to slow down, to pay attention, be humble.

\*I won't give you the multiple perspectives out there...I'll give you the one I landed on.

\*Temple sacrifices always were accompanied by salt...salt and fire were the processes of sacrifice to God.

\*I think this is the wrap up of this passage where his key guys were:

1. Powerless as they attempted to act in their own power
2. Competing their own greatness in the presence of Jesus.
3. Argued with Jesus about his coming sacrifice
4. Then they attempted to censor an obvious ally just because he was not a part of their little group.

\*So the Lord's final word to them here is...

1. Be prepared for sacrifice, it won't just be me who will sacrifice...but you will as well...we will all be "salted with fire"

2. It will be through our sacrifice that we will play our role in the world..."flavor and perservative"

-Do not run from sacrifice, do not play to the crowds...do not lose your flavor.

3. This perspective, this lifestyle will show up in your relationships...your behavior.

\*This is the way of the gospel...sacrifice

\*The impact of the gospel...flavor and preservative in culture

\*The fruit of the gospel...sweetness in relationships with others.

## **CONCLUSION:**

\*Still bothered, puzzled about hell?

\*I would think we all are to a degree...and we should be.

\*I'll give you some of my own thoughts, then an application.

### **1. As I ponder this subject (and others) I ask myself..."Do I trust him or not?"**

-Do I believe he loves people? I do

-Do I believe he is good and to be trusted? I do

\*If don't believe these things, I will struggle with many things, not just this idea of hell.

\*If I do trust him...I must trust him with what I cannot get my mind all the way around.

\*If I can only accept what I can fully figure out...I will have to become "God."

\*More on this in a minute.

\*This is just one of many areas where I have to determine if I will trust him or myself or someone else.

\*But where else can I go? Who is more trustworthy than him?

\*It makes some sense to me now...I assume it will make more sense when I am more fully grown...when I see him face to face.

\*This is not a cop out...its the way all children act when they love their parent and their parent has proven trustworthy...and they don't fully understand.

### **2. Could things be other than are now?**

\*"If I were God, I would..."

\*When God in his infinite wisdom takes into account all the variables, all the factors of potential realities, and as well as his own fixed character and nature.

\*Then this is the best of all possible worlds.

\*Why is there something rather than nothing is a question no scientist can answer...but we can.

\*Because God determined that it is good that we exist and that this world exist.

\*And this world...designed by God is the one world that is optimal for all of what he considered good and therefore it is...good.

\*You may disagree with God...I cannot see how that is a rational position to hold.

\*It would seem more rational just to disbelieve in him than to disagree with him...(I don't think disbelieving in him is rational either).

\*But this very fact is the cause of many atheists...they disagree with how he has done things and so they decide to disbelieve in him.

\*Again, I would have to consider myself to be God in order to believe I could outthink him.

\*This is the best of all possible worlds...there is no other way of having done things that would have allowed for all the goods that God valued.

### **3. What about those who have not heard?**

\*Why are they penalized for "not making a choice they didn't know they had?"

\*Romans 1,2 says that all people everywhere have access to general revelation...the creation and their conscience.

\*I am convinced that all who respond to the light they have been given will be given more.

\*You see this in Scripture as well as in stories of people coming to faith in special circumstances where they had no direct access to the gospel.

\*Again, there are still going to be situations that we cannot explain or reason our way into complete satisfaction...what are we to do?

\*Trust. Not as a denial of a struggle but as a valid response to a struggle we cannot win on our own.

### **4. Finally, my thoughts on hell relate to the price Jesus paid that indicates very that high stakes are involved.**

\*Military does risk assessment and risk mitigation...they do not do risk avoidance.

\*Risk avoidance would be...never go to war, never train with things that are dangerous...but safe at all costs.

\*So why are they a risk management versus risk adverse organization?

\*Because there are times when the risk is worth it.

\*Our leaders and military members determine that freedom; protection of our national our families is worth the risk of death.

\*So in other words when the stakes are high enough...no price is too steep.

\*So using this analogy...look at the cross of Christ...and consider how high the stakes must have been in order for this magnitude of price to be paid.

\*Hell is a high stakes doctrine, at the Cross a high price was paid.

## **APPLICATION:**

\*I believe we are not intended to get tripped up by the language Jesus uses here but rather he intended it to stir us to action.

\*In our minds first then in our lives.

\*I'll let Peter, who likely was the source of Mark's gospel tell it in his own words from his own book...

**\*1Pet. 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.**

\*Briefly, we need to know what the "therefore" refers to...here's what precedes this verse.

\*We have been given a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus.

\*Our future inheritance is safe, it cannot be touched.

\*We are shielded by our faith until we experience this experience.

\*Even though now we suffer grief in all kinds of trials...these trials are a part of the strengthening of our shield of faith.

\*V. 8, 9...I need to read...

**"8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. "**

**\*1Pet. 1:13 Therefore (in light of all of this), prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.**

1. Prep your minds...think about the things that are real and true

2. Control yourself...determine to believe and live what is real.

-Not what I want to be real, but what actually is real (many personal implications for this)

3. Set your hope FULLY on grace...grace now, yes...but our full hope is a future hope...that's why it requires faith.

**\*You are not a leaf tossed back on forth on the sea of culture and time...**you have both the privilege and the responsibility to choose where your mind will take your life.

\*It's why we return here together week after week and why we go to him individually day after day...so that we can continue to set our hope where it belongs.

\*We continually reorient our minds and our lives to the reality of God and his gospel.

\*This is what means to stay in touch with the eternal so that we can live faithfully in the world of people stuck in time...who desperately need a touch of the eternal.

## **SMALL GROUP NOTES**

### **Mark 9:38-50**

#### **Intro:**

1. Discuss the three primary approaches to culture that the church has taken:

- a. Christ below culture
- b. Christ above culture
- c. Christ in culture

\*What has this looked like?

\*How would you describe the ideal approach for the church to take in culture?

2. Do you agree that the church has sometimes or often "chased culture"?

\*Why or why not?

\*If so what has been the results of this?

3. Have you ever struggled with wanting reality to be other than it is?

\*Have you ever had a friend or family member (don't mention names) who you felt suffered more than they needed to because they had trouble accepting life as it really is?

4. What are your own personal thoughts/struggles with hell?

5. Why is this a major stumbling block for people?

#### **Read:**

**Mark 9:38 "Teacher," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us." 39 "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, 40 for whoever is not against us is for us. 41 I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward. 42 "And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck. 43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. 47 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 than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where ““their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’**

**49 Everyone will be salted with fire. 50 “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”**

**Discuss:**

1. Why did John try to censor the man who was ministering in Jesus' name?
2. What did Jesus mean by "whoever is not against us is with us?"
3. List the "hyperbole" intentional exaggeration Jesus used in this passage to make his point.
4. How can you tell that he was using "hyperbole"?
5. What was his purpose in using this dramatic language?
6. Do you agree with Lewis (in principle) that in the end there are two kinds of people..."Those who say to God 'Thy will be done' and those to whom God says 'thy will be done?'  
\*Why or why not?
7. Terry said that his conviction is that this is "The best of all possible worlds."  
\*Why did he say he meant by that?  
\*Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?  
\*If you agree what are some implications of this for the doctrine of hell?
8. Jesus taught more on hell than anyone else in the NT, what does this indicate about the topic?  
\*Do you think people would be surprised to learn this?

**Apply:**

1. This and many topics like it really do come down to trust, how does this fact apply to your own current life challenges?
2. The price paid indicates the stakes were high. As you evaluate your life over the past week or month, would say you consistently lived in line with the reality and importance of the gospel?  
\*If not, what would it mean for you to alter your thinking, behavior to more consistently align with the serious nature of what Jesus is saying here?

**THE GOSPEL OF**

# MARK



**Mark 9:38-50**

**“FOR EVEN THE  
SON OF MAN  
DID NOT COME  
TO BE SERVED,  
BUT TO SERVE,  
AND TO GIVE  
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MANY.”**

**MARK 10:45**

**J. STILL**

**"Only someone in touch with the eternal  
can hope to be eternally relevant and  
faithful too."**

Simone Weil



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**47 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 than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where “their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’ 49 Everyone will be salted with fire. 50 “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”**

**41 I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.**

**43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. 47 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 than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where “their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’**

**“The damned are, in one sense,  
successful, rebels to the end; the doors  
of hell are locked on the inside. . . . They  
enjoy forever the horrible freedom they  
have demanded, and are therefore self-  
enslaved.”**

**“the demand of the loveless and the self-imprisoned that they should be allowed to blackmail the universe: that till they consent to be happy (on their own terms) no one else shall taste joy: that theirs should be the final power; that hell should be able to veto heaven.”**

**"Heaven and hell are places defined, respectively, by God's presence or absence, by God's grace or wrath. Whose we are, not where we are, determines our misery or our joy. To transport a man from hell to heaven would bring him no joy unless he had a transformed relationship with God, a regenerating work that can be done only by the Holy Spirit. To the person sealed forever in righteousness, God will remain wondrous; to the one sealed forever in sin, God will remain dreadful. If we reject the best gift that a holy and gracious God can offer us, purchased with his blood, what remains, in the end, will be nothing but hell."**



**“A part of our problem with understanding hell comes from the way we think about heaven. We think about heaven as some kind of comfortable resort, but *the greatest thing about heaven is going to be the presence of God*. He has allowed us to avoid him here on earth in some measure if we want to, but if you go to heaven, God’s the biggest thing on the horizon. You’re no longer going to be able to avoid him. And that would be the supreme torture if you haven’t gotten over thinking of *yourself* as God. That’s why I sometimes say that the fires of heaven burn hotter than the fires of hell.”**

**"Some people not only want to hide from God, but want to be as far away from God as possible. Many people simply do not want to be with God. The best place for them to be is wherever God is not, and that's what hell is. Separation from God, and that comes about because people do not want to be with him. For those people, being with God is the worst thing that could possibly happen to them."**

**Psa. 14:1 The fool says in his heart,  
“There is no God.” They are corrupt,  
their deeds are vile; there is no one who  
does good.**

**49 Everyone will be salted with fire. 50  
“Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness,  
how can you make it salty again? Have  
salt in yourselves, and be at peace with  
each other.”**

**1. Do I trust him or not?**

**2. Could it be another way?**

**3. What about those who have never heard?**

**4. The price paid indicates the stakes are high.**



**1Pet. 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.**



