

# The Unquenchable Fire

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[ 0 : 00 ] Were it not for the blood of Jesus father. We would not be here. Were it not for the blood of Christ.

! As we tend to get distracted and pulled down.

And our eyes and hearts turn to other things. I pray that this week. You would use your word. As we study it now. You would begin to use your word this week.

To turn our hearts back to Christ. And back to the gift. That he has given us. Through his death on the cross. Through his victory over death and resurrection.

And through the power that he gives us. Through the indwelling spirit. Help us this week. Not to forget the word. That we are going to hear now. It is in Jesus name that we pray.

[ 1 : 08 ] Amen. Open up your Bibles to the gospel of Mark chapter 9. We are going to finish Mark chapter 9 this morning. So that we can move into Mark chapter 10 next week.

But this morning we are going to read verses 42 through 50. So I want you there in Mark chapter 9. We are going to begin writing in verse 42. And I want to ask you guys. If you would. To stand with me as we read.

In honor of the word of God. Mark 9 42. Jesus says. Whoever causes one of these little ones. Who believe in me. To sin. It would be better for him.

If a great millstone. Were hung around his neck. And he were thrown into the sea. And if your hand causes you to sin. Cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled.

Than with two hands to go to hell. To the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin. Cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame. Than with two feet.

[ 2 : 05 ] To be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin. Tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God. With one eye. Than with two eyes. To be thrown 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 has lost its saltiness. How will you make it salty again?

Have salt in yourselves. And be at peace with one another. Father take your word now. And open our hearts to receive it. We ask you to do that in Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I don't know about you guys. If you watch the news very often. I tend to get most of my news from reading. But I do watch the news on occasion.

And at this point in this year. The thing that I'm probably most tired of. Are polls. Are you guys tired of hearing about polls? It seems like every day.

[ 3 : 03 ] There are two or three or four new polls. That have come out. And sometimes they agree with yesterday's polls. Sometimes they contradict yesterday's polls. And whichever party seems to be down in a particular poll.

Decides to take the time to point out. The biases of the pollsters. In conducting that poll. And so at the end of the day. You can't really trust the polls anyway. Right? I mean I don't trust polls.

I know that you can. By the ways in which you ask questions. The ways that you word questions. By the people that you choose to ask. You can really get just about any answer that you want. So there's no real reason why we should trust polls.

I think it's something like. 73% of registered voters don't trust polls anyway. So we know that we can't trust polls. Right? None of us do. Well if you were to take a poll.

I think today. Of those who talk much about hell. Or think much about hell. Or have heard a lot of sermons on hell. I think that we would probably get pretty low numbers.

[ 4 : 00 ] But we don't really need a poll to tell us that do we? I mean we know that it's an uncomfortable topic. Because none of us really wants to spend a whole lot of time. Talking about

the issue of hell. Most of us have not heard very many.

If any sermons devoted specifically to the topic. And the issue of hell. You may have heard mentioned in a sermon. Touched on in somebody's Bible study. But very rarely do you hear a whole sermon.

Or a whole Bible study. That just deals with the issue of hell. And eternal punishment. So we don't need a poll to tell us. We have our own hearts. We have our own experience.

To tell us that hell is not a popular topic. And yet Jesus talks more about hell. Than he does about heaven. In the gospels. He talks more about judgment.

And God's judgment upon unbelievers. And the wicked than he does about heaven. There's a lot more information in the gospels. And in the rest of the Bible. About hell. And about judgment day.

[ 4 : 56 ] Than we're ever going to find in these pages. About heaven. Or about the reward of the righteous. It's scattered throughout. And when you read the gospels.

You find Jesus often. Often returning to the subject of the judgment of God. And the issue of hell. And we see it. We see it front and center. In this particular passage.

Now the first verse in this passage. Connects what we're reading here this morning. To what we talked about last week. I don't know if you recall. But last week. Jesus taught his disciples. About the dangers of spiritual pride.

And he used an object lesson for them. As they were sitting alone. In a house. Probably Peter's house. And Jesus had his disciples gathered around them. They're sitting on the floor. Because that was the customary standard way.

Of teaching. That the rabbi would sit on the floor. His disciples would sit on the floor. And he would begin to teach. And as Jesus sits on the floor. He calls a child over to him. And he uses a child as an object lesson.

[ 5 : 53 ] And tells them. That if they want to be. If they want to be great in the kingdom of God. They need to be. They need to become like a child. And we said last week. That children were not.

They were not prized the way that they're prized today. We order our lives around our kids a lot of times. I mean we arrange our schedules around. Their basketball games. And their baseball games.

And their school schedules. And all of that. That was not the case in the ancient world. Children followed along. And just. And did whatever they had to do. And stayed out of the way. As their parents. And as the adults around them.

Were conducting life. They weren't highly regarded. They were regarded as a gift from God. Because they would grow up to be adults. And inherit the family fortune. And carry on the family name. But beyond that.

They weren't highly prized. As children. And it was totally different. And so Jesus takes a child. Who would have not even been paid attention to. Most of the time. And says you want to be great. Then you need to become like a child.

[ 6 : 47 ] And you need to become a servant of all. Jesus says. So here in verse 42. What we have is a connection. Between that teaching on spiritual pride. And Jesus sort of.

Segwaying into his teaching. On the judgment of God. And hell. So he says here. As this child sits there. In the midst of them. He says. Whoever calls this. One of these little ones.

Who believe in me. To sin. It would be better for him. If a great millstone. Were hung around his neck. And he were thrown into the sea. Now there's a shift taking place here.

You can see it already. He's not simply focusing on the child. As a child. He was doing that earlier. Now he's focusing on the child. As one who believes in me. And so now the child comes to stand for.

Primarily for believers. And Jesus said. Whoever would call. One of those who believe in me. To sin. Literally the word means. To be. To be caused to stumble. Whoever would cause.

[ 7 : 43 ] One of these little ones. Who believes in me. Whoever would cause them to stumble. Whoever would tempt them. And trip them up. And lure them into sin. It would be better for that person. To have a great millstone.

Hung around their neck. And be thrown into the bottom of the sea. Now when he says great millstone. Literally it's a donkey stone. I know that sounds weird. But it's a donkey stone. Because there were different kinds of millstones.

There were some millstones. What they would do is. They would put the grain. Between two heavy stones. They would spin the stone. It would crush the grain. And that's what he's talking about. But there were smaller ones.

Smaller millstones. That a person was able to push and turn. This however is the large huge millstone. It would have poles that were connected to the top of it.

That would stick out. And a donkey would be lashed to it. And the donkey would pull and turn the millstone. To crush the grain. It's an immense heavy stone. That a human being would not be able to turn.

[ 8 : 41 ] You've got to have a donkey to do it. So Jesus says you take one of those big stones. They would have had a hole in the middle of them. Where you put the grain in. So he says put that around their neck. So the image here is not of like a rock tied with a little necklace around someone's neck.

The image of this is heavy stone with a hole in the middle of it. Just placed on their shoulders. It would immediately crush anyone that you did that to. Okay. But place it on them. And throw them into the sea.

It's an unavoidable death. It is judgment, Jesus says, that this person deserves. And then he uses that, as I said, to segue into a more specific discussion of judgment.

Where he says, he uses the same kinds of words. He says in verse 43, if your hand causes you to sin. That's the same word. Exact same word for to stumble. To cause to stumble.

To tempt and to lure into sin. So he says, he says now, so the person who causes someone who believes in me to stumble deserves judgment. Painful judgment. Drowning in the sea. And unable to survive.

[ 9 : 43 ] Now he says, now he turns it to you directly. Because we could say, yeah, that guy's bad. But now he turns it to us directly. And he says, now for you, disciples.

For you. If your hand causes you to stumble. If your hand leads you into sin. Then cut it off. Because, he says, it is better for you to enter life crippled.

Than with two hands. To go to hell. To the unquenchable fire. And then he says the same thing essentially two more times. Verse 45. If your foot causes you to sin. Or to stumble.

He says that you should cut it off. Because it's better to enter life lame. Than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And then he tells you to tear out your eye. Because it's better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye. Than with two eyes to be thrown into hell.

Now, there are three different words in the Bible that can be translated as hell. At various times. One of those words is a Hebrew word that's found in the Old Testament.

[ 10 : 44 ] Because the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. And that's the word sheol. Which you may have heard before. Typically the word sheol refers to the grave in the Old Testament. It's the place where you put a person's body after they die.

But at times it's used to refer to the afterlife in general. To the place where your spirit goes after you die. So your body goes to sheol to the grave. Your spirit goes to sheol into the afterlife.

So it has these different meanings. And you have to determine what it means from the context. And then there are a couple of instances in the Old Testament. Where sheol is used to refer not to the afterlife in general.

But specifically to a place of punishment for the wicked after they die. But not very often. Normally sheol means the grave or the afterlife. There are two words though in the New Testament.

That can be used. That can be translated as hell. And one of those is the word hades. Which you have probably heard of before. That word it's a Greek word. The New Testament is written in Greek.

[ 11 : 45 ] Unlike the Old Testament. And it's the word of the. It's the name of the Greek god of the underworld. And so it came to symbolize in the Greek world. The place of the dead. The realm of the dead.

The afterlife. And it's that word that's used most of the time. To translate sheol in the Greek version of the Old Testament. See most of the time.

Most of the time when the New Testament writers quote the Old Testament. Most of the time because they're writing in Greek. They are quoting the standard sort of well known Greek translation of the Old Testament.

That was around in their day. That was called the Septuagint. It's like our English translations. Because the common language of the day was Greek. They had to have a Greek translation of the Old Testament. Because many Jews could no longer read Hebrew.

Especially those who lived outside of Palestine. So the New Testament writers. When they're quoting the Old Testament. About 80% of the time. They're quoting directly from the Septuagint. Instead of doing their own sort of impromptu translation.

[ 12 : 42 ] And what you find when you go back to that Greek Old Testament. Is that most of the time the Hebrew word sheol is translated by the word Hades. But they're not exactly equivalent.

They're very similar. Hades most of the time. In Greek literature and in the New Testament. Most of the time Hades refers just to the afterlife in general.

The place where people go when they die. But there are a few instances in the New Testament. Where the word Hades refers specifically to what we would call hell.

To the place where unbelievers. And to the place where the wicked go for punishment after they die. Let me show you a couple of examples. So you get an idea of what I'm talking about here. Because I want you to understand these different terms for hell.

So if you turn over to the Gospel of Luke. Turn over to Luke chapter 16. There's a well known story that Jesus tells. People debate whether this is a parable.

[ 13 : 41 ] Or it's an actual historical event. But for our purposes it doesn't matter right now. Okay. Jesus tells the story of a rich man. And a poor man named Lazarus.

The poor man named Lazarus was righteous. The rich man was unrighteous. He did not care for the poor. He did not help others. And he says in verse 19. Jesus says that there was a rich man. Who was clothed in purple and fine linen. And who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus. Covered with sores. Who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table.

Moreover Jesus says. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. Now the poor man died. And was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. Or Abraham's side my translation says.

So that's the term that Jesus used in this story. To what we would call heaven. Or being in God's presence after you die. It says the rich man also died and was buried.

[ 14 : 38 ] And in Hades being in torment. He lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off. And Lazarus at his side. So here in this particular context. It's pretty clear that the word Hades means hell.

A place of punishment. Alright. Because you have a distinction between Abraham's bosom. Where the righteous go. And Hades where the rich man goes. And he's tormented. So there Hades means hell.

But most often as I said. Hades refers to either the grave. As Sheol does. Or to the afterlife in general. And you can see that in the book of Acts. If you turn over to Acts chapter 2.

Peter is preaching his Pentecost sermon. And Peter says this. He says about David. He says that David being a prophet. Verse 30. And knowing that God had sworn with an oath.

To him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne. David foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ. That he was not abandoned to Hades. Nor did his flesh see corruption.

[ 15 : 42 ] This Jesus God raised up. And of that we are all witnesses. So here in this context. The word Hades is used. Alright. But it's clear from the context. Because David.

Peter says that Jesus did not seek corruption. In other words. He wasn't in the grave long enough. For his body to decay. He wasn't in there long enough. His body. He didn't have to undergo corruption.

In his physical body. Instead God raised him from the dead. So here Hades refers to. Either the grave. Or the afterlife in general. It's not teaching that Jesus went to hell.

Which is a mistake that I have heard. A number of preachers make. Saying that Jesus went to hell to suffer for our sins. But what we see in the New Testament. Is that Christ satisfied. He made full payment for our sins.

Upon the cross. So what Peter. What Peter is saying here. Is that Jesus died. But he didn't stay dead long enough. For his body to decay.

[ 16 : 38 ] He didn't remain in the place of the dead. He didn't remain in Hades long enough for that to happen. So you have these two words. That you really have to examine.

To see whether or not they really refer to a place of torment. To a place of suffering. And I want to go over those two words to you. Because I want you to see the emphasis that Jesus is making in this passage.

Because he chooses to use neither of those words. There's no ambiguity here. Jesus is very very clear. He uses another word.

That every time it's used in the New Testament. Every time it's used by other Jewish writers. Within 200 years of Christ's life. It always refers to what we think of as hell.

Every single time. It's the word Gehenna. And it comes from a word that means the valley of Hinnom. Which is a place.

[17:36] It's an actual physical place. The valley of Hinnom. Where it's sometimes referred to as the valley of the sons of Hinnom. In the Old Testament. It was an actual valley. Just south of the city of Jerusalem.

And this Gehenna. This valley of Hinnom. It had a history in the minds of the Jewish people. And in order to really understand. I think the full force of what Jesus is saying.

We need to know a little bit of that background. We need to understand a little bit about what would have come to mind. When his disciples to whom Jesus was speaking. When these Jewish men heard Jesus say the word Gehenna.

We need to know some of that. And so one of the places that we see it mentioned in the Old Testament. Is in 2 Chronicles chapter 33. You of course know that in the books of Kings and Chronicles.

We're receiving the story of that period in Israel's history. When they were their own sort of sovereign kingdom. So that it wasn't it.

[18:35] That was not a time which the Egyptians or the Babylonians or the Assyrians ruled over them. But they had a king. They were their own kingdom. They had borders. They had their own armies. And yet the history of that time period is not a good history.

It is a history of ups and downs. Of good kings and wicked kings. And perhaps the most wicked king of all throughout that period was a king named Manasseh.

So in 2 Chronicles chapter 33. This is what you read about Manasseh. It says in verse 1 that Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to reign. And he reigned for 55 years in Jerusalem. He had a very long reign.

Verse 2 says that and he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel.

For he rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had broken down. And he erected altars to the Baals. That is to the false gods of the nations around him. He made Asherahs.

[19:37] Those are kind of idol. Made Asherahs and worshipped all the hosts of heaven and served them. So he is an idolater. Manasseh is. And he worships all of these false gods of the nations around them.

And then it says in verse 4. And he built altars in the house of the Lord. Of which the Lord had said in Jerusalem shall my name be forever. So he even built altars to false gods in God's own temple in Jerusalem.

And then it says in verse 5. And he built altars for all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. And he burned his sons as an offering in the valley of the son of Hinnom.

There it is. And used fortune telling and omens and sorcery and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord. Provoking him to anger.

So this valley of the sons of Hinnom. This Gehenna in the history of Israel. Was a place where the most wicked act that a person can do in God's eyes was done.

[20:46] He sacrificed children there in the valley of Hinnom. If you read through the law and you read through the Old Testament. You read the prophets. It becomes clear that there is nothing that God despises more than the sacrifice of children.

Over and over. We read the book of Joshua. And we see the conquest of the land. And we think how could God send Israel in to utterly destroy these people?

Why would he do that? And we are baffled by that. And we think how could he do such a thing? But if you read Joshua. After you read Genesis. One of the things you realize is that God told Abraham. I'm sending your descendants to Egypt for 400 years. So that the people who are now living in the land. He says I'm going to let them go their own way. And he says until the iniquity.

The sin of the Amorites. That's the people in the land. Until their sin is full. In other words until they become as wicked. As they possibly could be. Then I'll bring you back. And they will deserve to be wiped out.

[ 21 : 54 ] They will be so evil. And so wicked. That they will be deserving of the judgment that I bring upon them. Through your descendants Abraham. What's the height of their wickedness?

What is the thing that earns their extinction from the land? Child sacrifice. Sacrifice. And now. This is actually in 2nd Chronicles.

This is for the second time in the history of Israel. And the first time it happened here in the valley of Hinnom as well. For the second time here in this place. Unless the height of wickedness is reached. Children are sacrificed. In Gehenna. It is unparalleled wickedness. Unless we move away from that too far.

Before we pause to reflect upon ourselves. Lest we condemn them as horrible people. And say yes they deserved it. We do I think anytime we come across that. We do need to pause and consider the tens of millions of children.

[ 22 : 54 ] Who have been sacrificed in our own country. In abortion. We are no better. It is the height of wickedness.

Read the story from Genesis to Revelation. Read it. And over and over. Whom does Satan wage war against? Children. The height of wickedness.

Satan leads people to sacrifice children. When the Christ is born. Satan leads Herod to slaughter children. In the book of Revelation. It pictures. It pictures.

The onslaught of Satan against the church. As an attack upon the woman. And her child. Who represents the church. It is a constant attack upon children.

Throughout the pages. Satan would have our children. He would ruin them. He would destroy them. And the place. The valley of Hinnom.

[ 23 : 52 ] Gehenna. Was known in Israel's history. For the place. Where the very heights of wickedness. Were reached. That's where it happened. In fact.

If you turn to the prophet Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 19. As God speaks through Jeremiah. Condemning the sins of the people. And warning them of coming judgment. He says this in Jeremiah 19.

He says. Because the people have forsaken me. And have profaned this place. By making offerings in it to other gods. Who neither they nor their fathers. Nor the kings of Judah have known.

And because they have filled this place. With the blood of innocents. And have built the high places of Baal. To burn their sons. In the fire. As burnt offerings to Baal. Which I did not command or decree.

Nor did it come into my mind. Therefore behold. Days are coming. Declares the Lord. When this place shall no more be called Topheth. Or the valley of the son of Hinnom. But the valley of slaughter.

[ 24 : 50 ] In other words. God is saying. There is coming a time. When this place will be known as the place. Where I slaughter the wicked. That is what this place will be known as. It's no wonder that by the time.

That Christ lived upon the earth. That the word Gehenna. No longer referred to the valley. Just south of the city. Not primarily in the minds of the people. By that time.

It referred to the place. Of God's. Slaughter. Of the wicked. Judgment. In fact. By now. The actual valley itself. Was no longer.

Used for anything. Good. It had now become a place. Where they dumped their refuse. And their trash. This was a place. Where they dumped the bodies. Of criminals. After they were executed. And left them out there. In the open to rot. These are the images. That would come. To the disciples minds. And so Jesus comes. And he makes it absolutely clear.

[ 25 : 49 ] In Mark. Chapter nine. That he. He is referring. To a place. Of. Unfathomable. Judgment. And pain. That is.

Deserved. Because of the wickedness. Of people. And yet. We would say. Oftentimes. Our culture. If. If a person. Even believes.

In the existence. Of hell. They would say. Well. Well. Hell is probably there. For. For. For. The really bad people. Like. Like Hitler. Or like Osama bin Laden.

People like that. If there is a hell. It's reserved. For people like that. But listen. To what Jesus says. He does not speak. These words.

To the most wicked. People. That there are. He speaks. These words. To his disciples. Listen. Carefully. To what he says. Verse 43. If your hand. Causes you to sin.  
[ 26 : 43 ] Cut it off. It is better. For you. To enter life. Crippled. Than with two hands. To go. To hell. To the unquenchable. Fire. Better for you.

Right. I got it. There we go. I'll yell. Better. Better for you. All right.  
So this is aimed at us. This is aimed at people. Who would normally. Ignore anything. About hell. As referencing. Us. And he says. It's better. For you. It's better for you.  
To be crippled. It's better for you. To be lame. It's better for you. To be half blind. It's better for all. Any of these things. To befall you. Than to go to hell. For what?  
For your. Sin. So this is. This is not a warning. For the ultra. Wicked. This is a warning. For you.  
[ 27 : 41 ] And for me. This is a warning. For all those. Who sin. That's us. Better for you. He says. And if you want to understand.

What hell is like. We aren't given. A lot of vivid descriptions. Of hell. But Jesus gives us. Enough information. In this passage. To have a. A basic idea. Of what hell is. He describes it.  
In verse six. At the. In verse. Verse 43. As the. Unquench. Verse 44. Sorry. As the unquenchable. Fire. And then he describes it.

Further down. At the end of verse 48. As the fire that is. Not. Quenched. In other words. It never ends. It is a torment. That will not. Go away.

There is an idea. Among some theologians. That. That those. Those who. Reject Christ. Those who. Pursue their own way. And remain in sin. Until the day.  
[ 28 : 37 ] That they die. That they will simply. Be deprived of heaven. And they will cease to exist. That's called annihilationism. That's not. According to Christ. Here. There is.

There is no more mercy. At this point. There is no more. Grace. It is an. Everlasting. Unending. Unquenchable. Fire. It never.

Ends. And people like to debate. Is this a literal fire? Or is it. Symbolic. And all of those things. Set that aside. And recognize. That Jesus.

Main point here. Is it doesn't end. And it's painful. What are probably. The. The two. Worst ways. To die. That you can imagine. For me. The worst that I can imagine. Would be. Drowning. And being burned. And he uses. Both of these images. To describe the judgment of God. In this passage. There is nothing more painful. There is nothing more. Terrifying. Than to die. In these ways.

[ 29 : 31 ] And yet. He says. Here. That this will be. An unending death. The pain. Never goes away. It's everlasting. Torment. It's an. Unquenchable.

Fire. You could not. Put out this fire. You could not. End this anguish. With all the fire departments. In the world. It cannot. Be. Stopped. It's unquenchable. He describes it.

In another way. Verse 48. He describes it also. As. Where. Their worm. Does. Not. Die. I think that probably. Calls to mind. The fact. That this place.

The. Gehenna. The valley of Hinoam. At this time. Is that place. Where they. Where they threw the bodies. Of criminals. After they were executed. And they just. Wrought it out there. And now Jesus. Highlighting that says.

It doesn't stop. You know. The normal. Process of. Of decomposition. And decay. Is eventually. You're left with nothing. But dust. Right. And dust.

[ 30 : 28 ] Dust. There's no. It's just dust. There's nothing to it. But Jesus says here. The worm doesn't die. It never stops. In other words. The pain. The pain.

That you undergo. In hell. Is an external pain. It hurts. Physically. It's external. It's like a fire. That burns you. Continually.

And it is internal. Like the worm. That eats you. From the inside out. And it never goes away. It is an all. Encompassing pain. In every way. That you can imagine. Physical pain. Alright.

Because this. Gehenna. This is. This is not that temporary place. Before the judgment. This is ultimate. Final judgment. That we see. After the book. In the book of Revelation. This is the. Lake of fire. So these are people.

Who have been given. Resurrected bodies. And then judged. Alright. So there is physical pain here. There is emotional pain. There is every. There is every pain imaginable.

[ 31 : 24 ] It is. It is utter. Separation. From the mercy. From the mercy. And grace. And love. Of God. Of God. And devotion.

Over. Pain. And torment. And judgment. There is nothing. That we can. Imagine. There is no. That we can. That we can. That we can. I can't even, I can tell you what Jesus says, but I can't paint it in vivid enough detail for you and I to really get a grasp of what Jesus is talking about here. It's unimaginable. But it's not inevitable. It's unimaginable, but it is not inevitable. Notice what Jesus says. He says, if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off.

If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. What's he talking about? Does he mean literally cut your hand off and your foot and rip out your eyeball?

[ 32 : 27 ] I don't think so because none of the disciples did that. We don't have any record of anybody ever doing that in the New Testament. I don't think that's what he means. I think what Jesus is saying to his disciples is you must repent.

You must do everything in your power to run away from and to turn away from sin. It will hound you. It will seek after you. It will try to cause you to stumble.

It will try to subdue you all your life. And repentance is not a one-time effort. Repentance is not something you do at a revival and then you're done with it. Repentance is an ongoing daily fight against sin that every believer must wage.

This is not about earning your salvation. This is not about performing some work to gain you access into heaven or to free you from the torments of hell.

This is just the flip side of faith. Faith rests in Jesus as an all-sufficient Savior and forgoes all efforts to attain salvation on our own.

[ 33 : 30 ] And repentance is the opposite side of that because if you rest on Christ as a sufficient Savior and you trust in Him fully, you cannot cling to Christ and sin at the same time.

It's not possible. You can't hold sin in your hands and hold Christ in your hands. Faith reaches for Christ, but in order for faith to reach for Christ, you must let go of sin. And Jesus says every day sin will try to creep back in.

And the test of whether or not you have really gotten hold of Christ, the test of whether you really have believed in Him, is that every day you will wage war. Every day you will repent of your sins. And whatever that takes, whatever cost you must pay in your life, you will pay that cost in order to remain united with Christ, to prove that you have gotten hold of Him.

So whatever you have to get rid of, you'll get rid of. So if you find that you are unable to resist temptation in the form of images on your computer, Jesus says, get rid of the images.

[ 34 : 38 ] Do whatever you have to do to separate yourself from it. If you find that you cannot avoid coveting every time you get on Facebook and see the false, built-up, pretend lies of all your Facebook friends, and you cannot avoid the coveting that arises in our hearts so easily, then Jesus says, just cut it off.

Just quit. It's not complicated. This is not difficult. It's a simple concept. Stop. Cut it off. And you notice He indicates our hands, our feet, and our eyes.

And I'm not sure if Christ means for us to see it in this way, but in terms of practical application, I think it's good for us to think in terms of what we do with our hands, where we go with our feet, and what we see or even our other senses hear because of eyes.

So the things that we do, the places we go, and the things that we see and hear, Jesus says, anything that falls into those categories that leads you to sin, that would pull you away, kill it. Get rid of it. There's no more. There are places that we probably cannot go, that you may not be able to go without falling into sin.

[ 35 : 54 ] You can't go there anymore. There are things that you cannot see, and you cannot look at, and you cannot listen to, because it leads you into sin. It may be that somebody sitting in the room can see or hear something, and it doesn't lead them into sin, and it's fine for them, but for you, if you see that or you hear that, it will lead you to sin.

If you listen over and over to certain music, it may not affect the person over here, but for you, it causes things to well up in you. It causes rebellion to well up in you, or it causes lust to well up within you, or it causes you to covet the things that they're singing about, and you feel and you know that when you listen to that over and over, it leads you to sin.

It's not that I'm not condemning music, I'm condemning you listening to something that leads you to sin. Or there may be some things that you watch on television that you just shouldn't watch.

It's not a horrible show, maybe there's nothing really wrong with it in the end, but it always leads you to sinful thoughts. You cannot watch it.

Period. You just can't. And the sign of a person who really believes in Jesus, who really trusts in Jesus, is every day they are repenting.

[ 37 : 12 ] Every day they are cutting off things that lead them to sin. Every day they are killing things in themselves that would lead them away from Christ and into sin.

Every day. And if that's not true of you, if you're not daily killing sin, if you're not daily repenting of your sin, then I think that Jesus would say to you, you have not yet trusted in me.

You have not yet trusted in me. You may go to church regularly or read your Bible regularly, but you have not yet given your heart to me.

That's why the Apostle Paul commands us to test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. And the very fact that we are able to so deceive ourselves and make ourselves think that we are really trusting in Jesus is the reason that someday Jesus will say to those who call out His name, depart from me, I never knew you.

We have deceptive hearts that will lead us away from Christ and blind us to the reality that we do not really know Him. And Jesus gives us a clear test here.

[ 38 : 26 ] You either repent daily, you either cut off those things that lead you to sin, or hell awaits you. This is not Jesus saying, if you've trusted in me and then you sin, you might lose your salvation.

This is Jesus saying, if you've trusted in me, daily repentance will be evidenced in your life. And if not, there will be no daily repentance and hell waits for you because you never trusted in me. This is what He's saying to us here.

It is a dangerous thing to let sin go unchecked in your heart. It is a dangerous thing. Something else that Jesus says at the end of this paragraph that, to be honest with you, I spent the majority of this week just scratching my head as I read these last couple of verses.

In verse 49, He says, for everyone will be salted with fire. And then He says in verse 50 that salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again?

And then He gives us a command, have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another.

Honestly, I have no idea how that's connected to what He's saying about hell.

[ 39 : 37 ] I'm still scratching my head about it and I couldn't find a single commentator who had a clue. Alright? So here's what I think. I think that Mark is tacking on to the end of this teaching some other things that Jesus said at other times in His ministry.

Remember, these aren't strictly chronological accounts of the life of Christ. That's why it's okay for one gospel writer to have this story before this story and another gospel writer to switch them.

They're not writing modern biographies. These aren't necessarily strictly chronological. So there are times when they will just sort of string together some things that Jesus said at different times and just kind of put them in a row.

I think that's what's happening here because I cannot see a clear connection between these things logically. There is a connection in terms of words because He's been talking about fire and He talks about fire in verse 49 for everyone will be salted with fire.

Now He's used the word salt so He can throw in some things that Jesus said about salt at other times and He does. Salt is good, but the salt is also saltiness. How will you make it salty again? So have salt in yourselves.

[ 40 : 41 ] Be at peace with one another. I don't know how that's connected. I don't think it's logically connected to what Jesus says about hell. But I will say this for you. I think that what Jesus means basically when He says for everyone will be salted with fire, I think He means everyone will be tested.

And then He has a separate teaching on salt in verse 50. Salt is good, He says. But if salt loses its saltiness, you can't flavor it again.

You can't make it salty again. And this is tied into the teachings of Jesus where He says that you are the salt of the earth. In other words, we are those who flavor the world. We are those who preserve the gospel in the world.

And so we have a task in the world. We are to be salt and light in the world. And then He says, so have salt in yourselves. Be that salt in the world.

Be the one who takes the gospel into the world. And then as a consequence of that, be at peace with one another. See, one of the signs, I think, often, that we are not being the salt and the light that Christ commands us to be several times in the gospels.

[ 41 : 48 ] One of the clear signs that we're not doing that is that we are not at peace with one another in the body of Christ. People get angry and they grow bitter and they don't forgive one another.

And all these sorts of things begin to happen within the church. And that's a sign that we are not being salt in the world. We are not being light in the world. And if I can tie it back to what Jesus says about hell by way of application, here's what I would say.

If we don't repent of that, there is the danger that we stand as those, even though we are outwardly connected to the body of Christ, we stand in danger of being those who do not really know Him if we fail to repent of this.

If we look in our lives and we find strife with other believers that is ongoing and we refuse to repent of, or if we find that we are not salt in the world, we do not take the gospel, we do not glorify God by our good works in the world, if we find that we are not those things perpetually all the time, we're not repenting each day of our failure.

And we stand in danger of hell awaiting us because we've never fully trusted in Jesus. My appeal to you would be to test yourself, to look at your life, to look at your heart and ask yourself, am I repentant?

[ 43 : 19 ] Not did I repent back then when I walked an aisle or before I was baptized or any of those things I'm not talking about. I'm saying, are you a person characterized by daily repentance?

The Puritans called this the mortification of sin, the killing of sin. Am I characterized by a fight, a war against sin in my heart, in my life every day?

And if you are not, then trust in Jesus and begin the fight. And I suspect that probably what most of us need at the end of something like this is a little bit of encouragement.

And here's my word of encouragement to you. This is not a fight that you wage on your own. This is not salvation. Your eternal destiny is not dependent upon your ability to resist temptation.

It is not dependent upon your fighting skills in the war with sin. It is altogether dependent upon how much you trust in Jesus and if that trust is genuine.

[ 44 : 24 ] Because if it's genuine, the Spirit lives within you and He begins to wage war through you. Paul says that you must put to death the members of the body.

In other words, what Paul is saying is the deeds of the body. What Paul is saying is what Jesus is saying. You put to death anything in yourself that leads you to sin. But, I did not quote that correctly because what he really says is by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body.

All you need to wage war against sin you have in the indwelling Spirit who will illuminate this Word and make it come to life for you and you will be able to wage war as Jesus does out in the desert in the wilderness.

You will be able to wage war with this Word because of the Spirit within you. The only issue is does he dwell within you? That's the question. Let's pray.

Father, we now...