**Have Salt in Yourselves**

Mark 9:42 -50 (Key Verse 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.”*

We thank God for the privilege of hosting the spring bible conference. I am particularly thankful for the environment during the conference, all the servants, presiders, prayer servants, worship team, group bible study leaders and the messengers. The Lord really used each one of you for his glory. It was also wonderful to hear deep testimonies, where attendees really took time to struggled with the word of God. It is always beautiful sight when God’s word shows us something new or strengthens us.

Now we will be continuing with the book of Mark. Last message before the conference was delivered by shd Desmond, he revealed from God’s word, what it means to be the first. Or what it means to be the greatest. We learned that those who become greatest has to do with their attitude. It is those who become servants of all. Today’s passage continues on the need for believers to have a certain attitude in this life, that we should strive to grow our personality rather than striving to have power, recognition or position. Like Jesus who is God yet decided to be a servant of all and welcome anyone, even laying down his life for us on the cross. Jesus is indeed great. May we grow to have Jesus personality and attitude. May we have salt within ourselves for the glory of God. Amen!

Let us all read verse 50, “Salt is good, but if the salt loses its saltiness, with what will you season it? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with one another.” What does it mean to have salt among yourselves? What does it mean to lose your saltiness? Through this passage it becomes clear that it is all related to causes of sin and what our attitude ought to be like towards things that causes sin. It is a call to live a sacrificial life, firstly serving others with a fearful heart so we may not cause them to sin. Secondly, cutting off all things that cause us to sin. Let us look at verse 42 “But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be thrown into the sea.” The little ones are generally those who are new in the faith or those who can easily be misled by simple things. They have not yet become firm in faith and can easily be distracted. In many instances many of us are like little ones. A millstone is a heavy object generally used to grind seeds such as wheat and others. So Jesus is saying it would be better for a person who causes another person to sin, to die horribly. Have this heavy object hung on their necks and thrown into the sea. Jesus is saying that it is better than causing anyone to sin. This means that to have salt within ourselves, we should serve others with fearful hearts. We should be careful how we conduct ourselves before others. Since we may not know who is a little one or their weaknesses. For example as a bible teacher serving someone new in the faith, if I miss or fail to commit to bible studies I set, the person new in the faith may start becoming discouraged and ultimately lose that little faith. Me not being able to commit to the appointments may make them feel, if am not serious about the things of God, then God may also not be real. Since I do not seem to have the fear of the Lord. To have salt within ourselves is to live sacrificial life, not just simply living the way we want out of convenience, but being careful. One of the things taken for granted yet dangerous, is jokes. In our ministry we once had some new members leave because some existing members made some joke and those new members overhead and next thing they left. They did not feel welcomed because of a joke.

The other area taken lightly is sarcasm yet impactful. Sarcasm is the use of words that mean the opposite of what the speaker really thinks in order to insult, show irritation, or be funny. For believers I think they would be using sarcasm not to insult but for fun, to be funny. However, not everyone receives sarcasm well. I am actually one of those people. However, imagine for children, literal children, they have no clue what is sarcasm. They would take what the person is saying literally since they cannot differentiate from sarcasm. We need to be careful, we do not cause anyone to lose faith or fellowship with believers because we failed to be careful or serve them with a fearful heart.

The list is plenty on areas we could cause others to sin, other areas is related to food, drink and so on. For example concerning fool Paul’s says this in 1 Cor 8:9-13, “9 Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol’s temple, won’t that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? 11 So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. 12 When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.” The principle is, we need to take care of how we live around others. Though we may be free in Jesus Christ we still need to take care, in 1 Corinthians 10:23-24 we read, “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.” Living by this kind of attitude and character according 1 Cor 10, is a sure evidence that we have salt within ourselves.

Let us now look at, what our attitude should be like towards what causes us to sin. Verses 43-47 tells us about cutting off certain body parts that cause us to sin. Look at verse 43, “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two hands and go into hell, into the unquenchable fire.” Our hands can become tools for sinning. We can steal things from people with our hands, many in our country steal things from peoples pockets or hand bags. Some enjoy gambling and commit evil crimes such as murder with their hands. Lustful desires temp many men to use their hands to touch women in certain inappropriate places. That’s why you would easily hear of sexual harassment cases at work places. This will be because a man touched a women in a certain way. Jesus says, if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off, it is better for us to enter life maimed than with two hands.

Verse 45 says, “If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and be thrown into hell.” Here it is about the foot, similar to our hands, our foot can lead us to sin. We depend on our foot to go to places that may not be pleasing to God. It is better we cut off that foot that causes us to sin.

Verses 47 talks about the eye, that it is better to pluck it out if it causes us to sin. Our eyes sees all kinds of things. We may not be in control of what the world presents, however we are in control in some measure of what we choose to look at. With the spread of social media there is all kinds of content that has been made. Some social media platforms are so smart that they have algorithms to keep showing you similar content based on your past views. Which means if you were spending time looking at sinful content, you will continuously be fed that rubbish. Through our eyes all kinds of sins are kindled in our hearts. In the garden of Eden before Eve fell into the sin of eating the forbidden fruit. The bible says in Gen 3:6a, “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and **pleasing to the eye**,..” the fruit was pleasing to the eye and she ultimately gave in and ate it. In the ten commandments were are warned against coveting anything that belongs to another person, this also includes envy. All these are a result of our eyes. What we see others have that we do not have and then we start to envy and covet. Jesus says we should pluck that eye out, better to enter God’s kingdom with one eye than to have two eyes yet end in hell.

However, if we cut off our body part which causes us to sin continually, nothing will remain in our body. This is because sin is a matter of the heart. Even if we cut that body part it does not change the state of the heart. What Jesus meant here is that, we must struggle against sin in a serious way. We should not take anything that causes us to sin for granted. Just like mutilating a body part can be a painful thing. When we truly desire to have and retain salt within us, our lives are not going to be that easy living. To have salt within us is a call for a sacrificial living. With this teaching, Jesus tried to correct a big misunderstanding on the part of the disciples. They thought of the kingdom mainly in terms of reward, not in terms of sacrifice. To live lives with salt within us, is a call to a sacrificial life. It is a necessary sacrifice in this world, because our ultimate destiny is the kingdom of God. However, if we choose to live an easy going life, saying that we are freed by Jesus to live freely. Going with the flow and simply following trends. We end up not having salt within us and becoming tasteless. Only living a life and having friends who only live for pleasure and do not stand for anything worthy of God’s kingdom. We end up becoming no different from those who do not believe. Ultimately, we will be awaited by hell.

Verse 48 says, “where ‘their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.’” “This worm is only a continual remorse and furious reflection of the soul upon its own willful foolishness, and now misery. The message of Jesus was clear: knowing how terrible hell is, it is worth any sacrifice to avoid. Therefore, we cannot think of the kingdom of God just in the context of reward; we must also think in terms of sacrifice. Look at verse 49, “For everyone will be salted with fire.” All believers will be seasoned with fire, every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. Let us all read verse 50 once more, “Salt is good, but if the salt loses its saltiness, with what will you season it? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with one another.” If we lose our saltiness, with what can we be seasoned with in order to be salty again. This is a rhetorical question to imply that, if we but lose our saltiness, we may never be able to be salty again within ourselves. Living a careless life, not willing to cut off what causes us to sin and causing others to sin will result in losing our saltiness. This means even the stubbornness to repent and turn to Jesus. If we insist on living the way we want not willing to live sacrificial lives, we can never have peace among each other. Because we all come from different backgrounds and so we are bound to mis-understand each other. We can only be at peace with one another when we genuinely have salt within ourselves. When we are willing to compromise for others, willing to actively cut off, all that causes us to sin, living sacrificial lives and serving others with fearful hearts. We can be at peace with one another. Amen!

**In conclusion**, it is clear that having salt within ourselves is for our own good. Just like salt gives meaning to food. Having salt within ourselves makes our lives meaningful, moreover we can also be used by God in building others up in the faith. Through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus, through Jesus blood we have been seasoned to have salt within us. It is God’s desire that we meet in His kingdom rather than go to hell. Because both hell and God’s kingdom are real. May we follow Jesus and be used by God as salt of the world. May we have salt within ourselves. Amen!