

Title: Salted With Fire
Passage: Mark 9:49-50

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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.”

Introduction

Jesus' teachings

- make clear on exclusivity of the Gospel - either heaven through Him or hell.
- If you are not killing sin, it will kill you.

Repentance

- Is this an emphasis of works over grace?

The Gospel:

- Salvation is by faith alone through Christ alone through grace alone
 - Salvation is through faith alone
 - But that saving faith never comes alone (genuine faith comes with visible transformation of your life)
- Contrast: misperceived Christians
 - Superficial belief in Jesus who is considered a professing Christian.
 - Some quick to baptize anyone who says they believe Jesus (note: even demons believe Jesus is God)
- Truth: You cannot be a Christian who doesn't fight sin.
 - In Christ, you fight not to be right with God
 - In Christ, you fight because you are already right with God.

Exposition

Mark 9:49

For everyone will be salted with fire.

Salted with Fire - Fire of Purification

- God is working in you (“salting you with fire”) to be like Christ.

Context

Mark 9:34 (disciples arguing)

But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.

Mark 9:38 (disciples jealous)

John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.”

Truth: everyone will be tested by fire

- fire removes impurities

- God uses sufferings and trials to evaluate us
- Everyone will be judged

Salted by Fire - Two aspects:

1. God uses suffering and trials to purify our faith
2. Day of Judgment

Seasoned with Salt

Ezekiel 43:23-24

When you have finished purifying it, you shall offer a bull from the herd without blemish and a ram from the flock without blemish. You shall present them before the Lord, and the priests shall sprinkle salt on them and offer them up as a burnt offering to the Lord.

- salt was added to sacrifice as a symbol of God's enduring covenant

Leviticus 2:13

You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. You shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be missing from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.

- grain offering = offering of consecration (total devotion to God)

1. Salted with Fire - Trials and sufferings

- God purifies us to be more like Christ
- We may fail (see Peter)
 - But in our failures, God teaches us to rely on Him.

1 Peter 1:6-7

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- Suffering is never accidental and never without purpose in your life.
- At times, suffering makes us more like Christ.
- Suffering is through the means by which our faith is tested.

2. Salted with Fire - Day of Judgment

- we all will sit before Day of Judgment (moral evaluation / assessment)

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

- Judgment: All Christians will be evaluated by what they have done.
- As Christians, this is not judgment of hell (we are spared in Christ).

John 3:18

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Philippians 1:15-18

Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

- People who do good to be popular or receive affirmation from others
- In the end, those who are saved but as through fire.

- Our motives should be just for Audience of One: God.

Matthew 6:1-3

Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

Mark 9:50

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.”

Salt is good

- Salt was primary means to preserve food.
- Salt produces good: to be more like Christ.
- Preserve godly influence in a decaying world.

Matthew 5:13

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

- Jesus has called us to still have a preserving influence in a dying world (even through our weaknesses)
- Our presence should elevate conversations and convictions.
- Question: Are you making a difference for Christ?
- Analogy: thermometer vs. thermostat
 - Thermometer: tells you what the temperature is
 - Thermostat: able to show temperature but has the ability to change it.
 - In Christ, we are connected with God and can make a difference.
 - Caveat: must act with discernment in changing atmosphere

but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again?

- If salt has impurities, it loses its effect.

How can we lose our saltiness?

- by impurities of the world
- What should we do - drastically and diligent in rooting out sin.

- the purity of our lives and clarity of our lips are closely connected

Mark 9:43-47

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 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,

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

1 Timothy 4:16

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

- you can know good theology but have bad works (big heads but small hearts)
- Truth: we must know the truth and reflect the truth correctly.
- Prayer: have big hearts and big hands.

Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

- what makes you different? The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mark 8:34-38

And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

- Unity of believers is grounded in the truth of the Gospel. Therefore, may have peace with one another (even in diversity)
- We are not conformed to one another (similar to each other = all the same externally) but conformed to Christ (same internally/spiritually)

Applications

God loves you so much that He doesn’t want to leave you as you came to Him.

- God wants to make us more like Christ.
- God doesn’t want to leave us where we started.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Trial and sufferings can be to make us more like Christ.

- Sufferings are not for punishment. He's not angry at you but loves you.

Romans 8:28-29a

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son

Trials and sufferings leads us to be dependent upon Him.

- break down our pride. We are truly still weak and feeble and need God.

James 1:2-4

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

God has been purifying you and working in your life - are you staying away from impurity.

Ephesians 4:22-24

to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

- we should be “putting off”
 - Contrast: Do we flirt with the world or place ourselves in compromising situations?
- We should be “putting on” Christ
- Do we love sin? We lose our saltiness.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Hold the Gospel closely as the litmus test as we treat others

- our motives should be pure and focused on God (not for worldly praise)

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

God will bring you to justice and judgment one day soon.

Hebrews 9:27

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,

- death can happen at any time.
- Are you ready to meet Your Maker?
- You cannot be perfect before a perfect God to be in heaven.
- But God sent Jesus, His Son, to die on the cross to pay the penalty of sin so that those who believe Jesus as their Lord may be saved.

Acts 16:31

And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”