

THE GOSPEL OF MARK "amputate"

'CAUSES'

*To put a stumbling block or impediment in the way upon which another may trip or fall. A moveable stick or trigger of a trap or snare.

*The stone is not a hand mill but one that a donkey would drive around and around to crush the grain. The stone is rather grotesquely pictured as 'placed round' the neck not hung from. The drowning itself is not an appropriate fate for such a person. A greater severity of actual punishment is coming.

*Cause of another's spiritual shipwreck is so serious an offence that a quick drowning would be a better fate.

Can your sin cause someone else to stumble?

HAND/FOOT/EYE

*Here we have what is called '**metaphoric hyperbole**'. These body organs are not useless or unprofitable but compared to the kingdom of God they are worthless. Nothing in this life is worth keeping us from the Kingdom of God.

*Judaism prohibited self mutilation – Deuteronomy 14:1

*Jesus speaks seriously of sin. Does not treat it lightly nor does he offer cheap and easy remedies. Kill the sin or sin will kill us. There is no negotiation when it comes to sin. The battle for purity is serious and life long. Romans 6:13, 19, 12:1-2

*The action of amputation is meant to be shocking – the matter of ultimate seriousness. Nothing less than eternal life is at stake.

*It means we have to get rid of some habit, abandon some pleasure, to give up some friendship, to cut out something which has become a part of us, in order to be fully obedient to the will of God.

***DANGER**—Taking Jesus words as harsh and cultish (extreme) or taking the sharpness off the blade and treating them with indifference.

Mark 9:42-50 (NIV)

⁽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. ⁽⁴⁴⁾ ⁽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. ⁽⁴⁶⁾ ⁽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." Everyone will be salted with fire. ⁽⁴⁹⁾ ⁽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."

"If you hand/foot/eye is causing you to stumble" "cut it off/pluck it out. It is better for you to enter life/the kingdom of God crippled/lame/one eye that to go/be cast into hell having two hand/feet/eyes."

HELL

*Gehenna is the Valley of Hinnom on the southwestern slopes of the city of Jerusalem. It was a refuse dump that was always on fire. It is used 12 times in the NT, with the exception of James 3:6, all by Jesus. It is best translated "hell" and is described in the NT as a place of . . .

1. Eternal punishment – Matthew 25:41, 46
2. Consisting of unquenchable fire – Mark 9:43, 48
3. Whose most famous occupants are the devil and his angels – Matthew 25:41, Revelation 20:10

*Jesus is the only one who spoke of hell – no where do we find Paul talking about it. Only Peter refers to hell and judgment in 2 Peter 2.

*Why does Jesus speak so much about it? Because he created it, he knows it is real.

SALT AND FIRE

*The bible uses both salt and fire but rarely do we see the two together. In the sacrifices offered in the temple salt is used in the burning of offerings. Leviticus 2:13, Ezra 6:9, 7:22, Ezekiel 43:24

*"covenant of salt" Numbers 18:19, 2 Chronicles 13:5

*Salt was one of the ingredients of the sacred incense and is linked with the qualities of being 'pure and holy.'" Exodus 30:35

*The fire is the salt which makes the life acceptable to God. Fire has two meanings . . .

1. Purification. If is the fire which purifies the base metal, the alloy is separated and the metal left is pure. Fire cleanses and purifies.
2. Destruction. This has to do with persecution – hardships and trials which everyone will face. 2 Timothy 3:12, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 1 Peter 1:6-7, 4:12

*Salt has all the properties of preservative, cleansing agent, and of flavoring. The message conveys discipleship is a serious matter, it is important to work at it in such a way that we retain the integrity and distinctiveness as a community of peace.

APPLICATION

*Are there stumbling blocks that are in your life hindering others from growing in their faith or coming to experience the grace of God?

*What areas in your life are demanding 'amputation' right now?

*Daily offer you body as a living sacrifice to God. Romans 12:1-2

Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

⁽¹⁾ Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. ⁽²⁾ Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.