

There is an Action movie with the Name
“Clear & Present Danger” – which I’ve never seen

& there is a Supreme Court Ruling from 1919 that made the
phrase “Clear & Present Danger” a Legal Test

Which I could very easily get Side-Tracked on
& apply to our current Crazy Political Situation

BUT - In both of those instances

a “Clear & Present Danger”
is an Absolute & Imminent Danger

& today – the LANGUAGE that Jesus himself uses
Is SO GRAPHIC - & So INTENSE

That (to me) it makes up
this same Kind of Intensity

& So – we’ll call the Three WARNINGS
that we’ll look at today

Three Clear & Present WARNINGS

Let’s Pray

How do we HANDLE
Serious & Dramatic Warnings in the Bible?

Sometimes – we AVOID THEM
Just kind of – SKIP over them

Maybe because we think
Certainly God CAN'T Mean What He Says

& Often – Bible Teachers Focus
on the “Counter-Balance” of the Rest of Scripture

& it IS important to Balance the Warnings
With the Big-Picture Truths of ALL the Bible

But – Sometimes we do that So Much
That we take-away the IMPACT of the Warnings

BUT – When Jesus DELIVERS Dramatic Warnngs
like he does today

He DOESN'T Soften them
HE DOESN'T counter-balance them

He DROPS them with Startling Force
& he allows us - to Wrestle with them

& so – I'm going to try to DO THAT – Today – Okay?

Let me start – by listing the Three
Clear & Present Warnings - From Jesus - in our Text

#1) BEWARE of CAUSING a Believer to FALL INTO SIN

#2) BEWARE of CODDLING SIN in your own life

#3) BEWARE of LOSING your SALTINESS

ALL Three of these Warnings

Come with Very Graphic Descriptions

That we have to Wrestle with – in our own lives

We're continuing our context - from Last week

Where we Looked at THREE

"We Still Don't Get It" Situations

& the 3rd one was

the Disciples explaining to Jesus

that they saw someone

Who was NOT in their group

Using the Name of Jesus

to Cast out Demons - & so - they told him to STOP IT

& in Response - Jesus told the Disciples

in Mark 9:39 – "Don't stop him!"

& then Jesus explained

Anyone who is Operating - in the Name of Jesus
& who is Not Against Jesus – is FOR Jesus

& that Leads Jesus – into a CONTRAST
WHICH Begins our Text Today

So – Let's back up One Vs – to Mark 9:41 – to start

Mark 9:41 (from last week) (NLT)

41 If anyone gives you even a cup of water because you belong to the Messiah, I tell you the truth, that person will surely be rewarded.

If anyone helps or supports you

In the Name of Jesus

& Because you belong to Jesus

That person will surely be rewarded – Praise the Lord

BUT THEN – the Contrast Vs comes -

Mark 9:42 (NLT)

42 “BUT (in contrast to helping a Christ-Follower) if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone hung around your neck.

<p><u>THAT</u> is a <u>Clear & Present WARNING</u></p>
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Now – this **phrase**

“Little Ones who Trust in Jesus”

It **Certainly CAN** (& does) **Apply to Children**

But – it is **also** used in a **Spiritual Sense**
for **NEW** or **YOUNG Believers**

So – **If** you **help someone** (**V.41** says)

Because they are a **Christ-Follower**,
AND in the **Name of Jesus** – then **your reward** is **sure**

BUT – if you cause a **New Believer**,
or a **Believer Young in the Faith** – to Fall into Sin

it would be better for you to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone hung around your neck.

A millstone is a **large stone** used to **Grind Wheat**
Even the **smallest ones weighing** over **100 pounds**

& so **Jesus says**

Wearing a **Necklace made** out of a **100 lb stone**
& **being thrown** into the **Sea**

Would be **BETTER** – **For you**
than what is **WAITING for you**

**IF you cause a New, or a Young Believer
to Fall into Sin**

**In CONTRAST
to this First Clear & Present Warning**

The Entire N.T. calls us:

To **Come Alongside** one another

To **Help Carry** One another's Burdens

To **Strengthen** One Another

To **Follow Jesus** Together with One Another

So **this First** – **DIRE WARNING** from **Jesus**

Is **about** our **INFLUENCE** - & our **IMPACT**
on **other** Believers (***Especially New or Young Believers***)

& **God Help us**

If we **cause them** to Fall into Sin

Okay – **Let's move on**

but you're **probably going** to **wish**

that we **would've spent** more **time**
on the **First Warning**

Because this **2nd Warning** - gets **even** more "**Personal**"

2nd – Clear & Present Warning

**These are the Words of Jesus
in the Very NEXT Vs**

Mark 9:43 (NLT)

43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better to enter eternal life with only one hand than to go into the unquenchable fires of hell with two hands.

I **told you** it was **gonna get**
even more "**Personal**"

BUT - instead of me explaining
just - **Cutting Off Your Hand**

Let's continue – in **order** to **get** the **full picture**

Mark 9:45 (NLT)

45 If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better to enter eternal life with only one foot than to be thrown into hell with two feet.

Alright – so far we're **Going to Heaven**
with **ONE Hand** & **ONE Foot**

RATHER than going to **Hell**
with all our **Appendages** – Right?

But – Jesus isn't Done - With this Warning YET

Mark 9:47-48 (NLT)

47 And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out. It's better to enter the Kingdom of God with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 'where the maggots never die and the fire never goes out.'

It's **NOT Graphic Enough**

For Jesus to just say be thrown into hell

& so he **adds** a **Detailed Description** of Hell in **V.48**

'where the maggots never die and the fire never goes out.'

& in the **King James Line** of **Translations**
that vs is actually **inserted**

after EACH of these **three**

Clear and Present Warnings

Cutting off Your **HAND**

Cutting off Your **FOOT**

Gouging out of **EYE**

THIS IS All - **Hyperbole**

Hyperbole is

an exaggerated statement not meant to be taken literally

We all KNOW that – Right?

So What is Jesus talking about?

Let me quote R. Kent Hughes here

What Jesus is calling for is not physical mutilation, but spiritual mortification—the cutting off of harmful practices from one's life.

& it is generally accepted

The HAND symbolizes WHAT we DO

The FOOT symbolizes WHERE We GO

The EYE symbolizes WHAT we are LOOKING AT

Jesus is using very *Graphic HYPERBOLE*****

to try to get this

Clear & Present Warning - across to us

**Are there Things we are DOING
that are CAUSING US to Sin?**

Jesus says – Radically Cut That Off

**Are there Places we are GOING
that are CAUSING US to Sin?**

Jesus says – Radically Cut That Off

**Are there Things we are LOOKING AT
that are CAUSING US to Sin?**

**GUESS WHAT Jesus says . . .
Radically Cut That Off**

This **Graphic Metaphor** – of **Cutting Off** an **Appendage**
Is **clearly conveying**

the **DECISIVENESS** - & the **SACRIFICE** Required
to **CONQUER** our **Sinful Habits**

Jesus is METAPHORICALLY saying

**Better a little Blood on the Ground Now
Than an Eternity Spent in Hell**

**Can we just ACCEPT this Clear & Present Warning
For what it is?**

& Not Rationalize, Justify, or Debate the issue?

So – Staying with this Idea
of a Sacrifice being Required – to Follow Jesus

Will LEAD us RIGHT INTO our last
Clear & Present Warning

Mark 9:49 (NLT)

49 “For everyone will be tested (think of sacrifice) *with fire*.

The ESV gives us the Literal - Mark 9:49 (ESV)

49 For everyone will be salted with fire.

This is a really HARD sentence to translate

But there’s a Definite Connection here

To the O.T. Sacrifices
which were required to be SALTED

So – Keeping with the Previous Context

There is the FIRE

of the Believer’s “Sanctification” (cutting off sin)
& there is – the Fire of HELL

& Jesus seems to be saying

that EVERYONE will be Tested
by ONE Fire or the OTHER

Either the Short-Term Fire

of SANCTIFYING our Lives for God

Or the Eternal Fire of HELL

The Good News is – we get to CHOOSE
Which Fire we want to be “Tested By”

If we CHOOSE – to Follow Jesus Christ

There is a “Refiner’s Fire” – that Sanctifies Us

To Be Sanctified – Means to be
“Set Apart” for God’s Use, & God’s Glory

& we need to EMBRACE The Refiners Fire
That Sanctifies us

Because that Sanctifying
Makes Us – The SALT of the Earth
Makes Us – USABLE By God

AND – That Sanctifying
Is what CONFIRMS - (*Not Earns – but Confirms*)

that we will NOT EXPERIENCE
the Alternate Fire – of HELL

& so – Hopefully it is EASY to See
That the Refiner’s Fire – that Sanctifies us

IS BETTER

The the Fire of HELL - that Separates us
From God’s Presence – For Eternity

**Finally - Because of the LITERAL Words of V.49
*For everyone will be SALTED with fire***

**Jesus continues with the SALT analogy
Which we find often in the N.T.**

& so – Jesus closes this section in

Mark 9:50 (NLT)

50 Salt is good for seasoning (that's us – Salted by the Refiner's Fire). But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? . . .

This is the THIRD – Clear & Present Warning

**Salt is GOOD – It Preserves Things
AND – it Causes Thirst**

& THAT is What
WE are called to be in the World

A Preserving Influence on a Fallen World
& Causing Thirst in an Unbelieving World

THAT is what God is Transforming us TO BE

The SALT of the Earth

A Preserving & Thirst Causing Influence

BUT - the **2nd sentence** in **v.50** says

if Salt loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again?

This is a **Rhetorical Warning**

Implying – that **once SALT** (*that's us*)
Loses its **Qualities**

it is impossible to **make** it **SALTY again**

It is a **More Subtle** – but **Just As SCARY** a **Warning**
As the **Previous Warnings** today, right?

& so – **THREE Clear & Present Warnings**

#1) BEWARE of **CAUSING** a Believer to **FALL INTO SIN**

#2) BEWARE of **CODDLING SIN** in your own life

#3) BEWARE of **LOSING** your **SALTINESS**

All 3 Warnings with **Really Graphic**
& **Serious Consequences** tied to them

#1) Cause a New Believer to Fall into Sin

Better to **tie** a **Millstone** tied **around** your **neck**
& be **cast** into the **Sea**

#2) Better to CUT OFF Sin in your Life

Than **Coddle Sin** & **Risk** an **Eternity in Hell**

→ → →

3) Beware of losing the “SaltQualities” of the Gospel in Your Life

Because you may not be able to get them BACK again

Hard Core – Clear & Present Warnings

So – **What do we do with these Warnings?**

I think – the best One Word Response is – REPENT

**& I think there is an URGENCY - & a DRASTIC-NESS
In these Words of Jesus**

**To Support the Need – to REPENT NOW
Turn from these things NOW**

& Turn TO Jesus

For **Forgiveness** - & **Restoration** - & **Transformation**

& Genuinely Seek

the **DAILY** “*Filling with the Holy Spirit*”

& the **DAILY** “*Closer Walk with Jesus*”

That the **Refiners Fire** would **PURIFY US**
& **TRANSFORM US**

& make us USABLE By God

For - Our GOOD, & For HIS Glory

& **THAT** is **how Jesus Finishes** this section
At the **END** of V.**50**

Mark 9:50(b) (NLT)

50 . . . You must have the qualities of salt among yourselves and live in peace with each other.”

As **Christ Followers**

We **Must Have** – the **Preserving**
& **Thirst Causing** - Qualities of Salt

AND – we **must Live in PEACE** with **Each Other**

Let's Pray