

Gospel of Mark 9:1-50 – Lesson 9

We have now entered the ninth chapter of the Gospel of Mark. This is the beginning of the second half of the Gospel, where the focus intensifies on Jesus' identity, His coming suffering, and ultimately His glorification. Mark dedicates a significant portion of his narrative to the final week of Jesus' ministry, emphasizing key teachings, events, and prophecies. In this section, we encounter three profound theological themes: the promise of seeing God's kingdom in power, the Transfiguration, and the inner transformation that mirrors Christ's glory.

Mark 9:1:

“And He said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.’”

This is a powerful promise made by Jesus. He is speaking to the disciples and affirming that some of them would witness the kingdom of God coming “with power” before they died. This statement has led to many interpretations. Some suggest it refers to the resurrection, others to Pentecost, or even to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. However, in the immediate context, Mark links this promise directly to the **Transfiguration**, which three disciples are about to witness. They would literally see the divine glory of Jesus—a preview of the power and majesty of the coming kingdom.

Verse 2:

“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them.”

Six days later, Jesus fulfills His promise to some of the disciples. He selects Peter, James, and John—His inner circle—and leads them up a high mountain, possibly Mount Hermon, the tallest in the region. Although we don't know for certain which mountain it was, Mount Hermon, with its height and isolation, fits the description well. Here, Jesus is **transfigured** before them. The Greek word used is *metamorphoo*, from which we derive the English word “metamorphosis.” This word means a change that begins on the inside and manifests outwardly. Jesus' divine glory, which had been veiled in His humanity, now radiates visibly before the disciples.

This moment was a revelation of who Jesus truly is. It validated His divine identity, and previewed His resurrection into His glory. It was a visible demonstration of the power and splendor of the Kingdom of God, affirming that Jesus is not only the suffering Servant, but also the glorious Son.

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Verse 3:

“His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.” Luke tells us this happened as Jesus began to pray: “As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening” (Luke 9:29).

The appearance of Jesus changes so dramatically that even His clothes radiate with divine light. The phrase “exceedingly white, like snow” emphasizes supernatural brilliance. The reference to a “launderer” (or “fuller” in KJV) highlights that no earthly process could produce such purity and brightness. His glory was not from this world; it came from heaven. This visible transformation mirrors the glorified Christ we read about in Revelation 1:13–16.

“And in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the **Son of Man**, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were **white like wool**, as **white as snow**, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and **His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.**”

Luke gives us an Interesting Parallel Insight.

“But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him.” — Luke 9:32

This verse from Luke provides important additional background. The disciples were so overcome with fatigue that they nearly missed this divine moment—they were **heavy with sleep**. But when they **fully awoke**, they saw Jesus’ **glory** and the appearance of **Moses and Elijah** standing with Him. This moment teaches us a powerful truth: **spiritual insight often requires us to be spiritually awake, alert, and attentive.**

We should not take a harsh view of the three disciples falling asleep at the beginning of this extraordinary event. Luke gives further context by telling us that it was the **next day** when they came down from the mountain:

“Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him.” — Luke 9:37

This means they stayed **all night** on the mountain! That’s a surprisingly longer duration than most people assume. They didn’t go up and come down in just a few hours—they **remained there until the next day**, experiencing a prolonged, sacred encounter with the divine.

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Let's examine a Spiritual Application of Metamorphosis for Believers.

This word “transfigured” (*metamorphoo*) is also used of believers in **Romans 12:2**:

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

Just as Jesus was transfigured in glory, we too are being transformed daily by the renewing of our minds through the Word and the Holy Spirit. Our transformation is internal, reflecting a change in our nature, desires, and thoughts. This is the process of sanctification—becoming more like Christ in holiness and character.

Here is a true Contrast between Hypocrisy vs. Transformation.

If *metamorphoo* describes true, inner transformation, its opposite might be described as **masquerade**—a false appearance of holiness. Jesus frequently rebuked the Pharisees for this kind of religious pretense. They changed their appearance, but not their hearts. True discipleship changes a person from the inside out.

This moment on the mountain was a turning point for Peter, James, and John. They saw Jesus in His glory, confirming that He was more than just a teacher or prophet. He was the Son of God, clothed in eternal light. The experience they had would remain with them, especially Peter, who later wrote:

Second Peter 1:16–17: “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables... but were eyewitnesses of His majesty... when He received from God the Father honor and glory...”

We too are called to walk in the light of that glory. As we are transformed by Christ's Spirit and Word, we become living testimonies of the Kingdom of God present in power.

Verse 4:

“And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.”

As Jesus is transfigured, two prominent Old Testament figures appear—Elijah and Moses. These two represent the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah). Their appearance underscores the truth that Jesus fulfills both the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew 5:17: “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

They were not simply standing nearby—they were actively conversing with Jesus. Mark does not tell us what their discussion was about, but Luke tells us. In Luke 9:31 we are told the subject of their discussion:

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“Who appeared in glory and spoke of His **decease** which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” The Greek word used here as “decease” is “exodos” and it means “departing, or exit,” and figuratively means “death.” They spoke of His upcoming death, departure, **His crucifixion**, which would happen in Jerusalem! This confirms the centrality of the Cross even in heavenly discussions.

Verse 5:

“Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’”

Peter, overwhelmed and awestruck, impulsively suggests building three tabernacles (shelters). His intentions seem honorable—he wanted to honor all three figures—but he misunderstood the scene. By equating Moses and Elijah equal with Jesus, Peter unintentionally diminishes the supremacy of Christ. Jesus does not share His divine glory with anyone as we see in Isaiah 42:8 “I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.”

Verse 6:

“because he (Peter) did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.”

Peter's reaction came from fear and confusion. He did not know what to say, so he said the first thing that came to mind. Sometimes we speak when silence would be wiser. This reminds us that awe before God's glory should lead to humility, not hasty words.

Verse 7:

“And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!’”

This verse is profoundly significant. The cloud represents the Shekinah Glory—the visible manifestation of God's presence, as seen in the Old Testament (Exodus 40:34). The voice of the Father declares Jesus as His Son and commands the disciples: “Hear Him!” Not Moses, not Elijah—only Jesus is the ultimate authority. This moment parallels Jesus' baptism (Mark 1:11), but here the Father adds, “Hear Him,” emphasizing Christ's divine authority and exclusive role in revelation and redemption. We recognize the Trinity present at this event.

Verse 8:

“Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves.”

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Moses and Elijah disappear. Only Jesus remains. The point is unmistakable: Jesus is central. He alone is to be followed. The Law and the Prophets pointed to Him, and now the disciples are to listen to Him alone. He is the fulfillment, not just a part of God's plan.

Verse 9:

“Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead.”

Jesus often instructed silence after major events as recorded in Mark 5:43 and 7:36. I imagine this was one of the hardest things Peter, James and John had to keep secret about. I know they wanted to tell the other nine disciples what they had witnessed seeing Jesus with Moses and Elijah. But they had to wait!

The transfiguration was a preview of His glorification. But it could not be properly understood until after His resurrection. The disciples had seen the glory, but they didn't yet understand the Cross. Without the resurrection, the glory would not make full sense.

Verse 10:

“So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.”

Despite Jesus clearly stating His future death and resurrection multiple times (Mark 8:31), the disciples still did not grasp it. They didn't understand what “rising from the dead” fully meant. This shows their lack of understanding of the necessity of Christ's suffering.

Verse 11:

“And they asked Him, saying, ‘Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’”

Their question reflects a prophetic concern from Malachi 4:5–6, which says Elijah would come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Since they just saw Elijah, this raised the question: was this the fulfillment of the prophecy? Or was there more?

Verse 12:

“Then He answered and told them, ‘Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt?’”

Jesus affirms the prophecy: Elijah must come. But He also redirects them to the deeper truth—they are missing that the Messiah must suffer (Isaiah 53). The Cross must precede the crown. This is a core teaching they struggled to understand.

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Verse 13:

“But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him.”

Jesus identifies John the Baptist as the “Elijah” who came to prepare the way (Matthew 17:12–13). The people rejected him just as they would reject the Messiah. Jesus points out that prophecy is being fulfilled, not in glorious acceptance, but in rejection and suffering.

The transfiguration was not merely a spectacle—it was a confirmation of Jesus' identity and a glimpse into the glory of the Kingdom of God. Peter, James, and John saw Jesus as He truly is: glorified, radiant, and above all. Moses and Elijah's appearance confirmed that Jesus fulfills all the Scriptures. The Father's voice confirmed His authority. And the Shekinah Glory—the cloud—reminded them of God's presence.

This powerful moment reminds us today that the Christian life is not just about seeing miracles or feeling emotional highs. It is about knowing Christ, hearing Him, and following Him, even through suffering.

The disciples' confusion teaches us that spiritual understanding is a process. Even those closest to Jesus needed time, correction, and the help of the Holy Spirit to fully understand.

And just like Peter, we often want to “build tabernacles”—we want to preserve spiritual highs rather than follow Jesus down the mountain into daily life. But we are not meant to stay in the glory—we are meant to carry it with us as we serve a broken world. We represent Jesus in this world, and we carry His glory to the lost people hoping and praying they will turn to our Savior quickly before it is too late for them.

Now, it is the next day and Jesus and Peter, James and John are returning from the mountain. Picture the scene with me. A large crowd has gathered; the nine disciples are surrounded by scribes and people, and they're waiting. They're waiting for Jesus to return from the mountain where He was transfigured while Peter, James, and John witnessed the event.

Mark 9:14-18:

“And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to *Him*, greeted Him.”

Now Jesus returns—and the crowd rushes toward Him. He immediately turns to the scribes and asks,

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“What are you discussing with them?” Then, out of the crowd, a man speaks up. He says, “Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.”

While Jesus was on the mountain, this desperate father brought his son to the nine disciples. He came in hope, but they couldn’t help. And when they failed, the scribes started questioning them—probably ridiculing them. *“Your master gave you power, didn’t He? Why can’t you cast it out?”*

And isn’t that the question we ask sometimes when prayers go unanswered? Why didn’t it work? Why wasn’t there power?

Verse 19:

Then Jesus speaks. His words cut through the crowd—and through time:

“O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.”

Let me ask you—would we fit into that category? A faithless generation? He gave the disciples power—power to heal, to preach, to cast out demons—and still, they failed. Could it be that we, too, are often the weak link in the chain between divine power and human faith? Yes, we are.

Verses 20-23:

They brought the boy to Jesus, and immediately the spirit in the child convulsed him. He fell to the ground, foaming at the mouth. It was a terrifying sight.

Jesus calmly asks the father, *“How long has this been happening to him?”* And the father replies, *“From childhood and often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”*

Can you hear the weariness in his voice? The father is exhausted. He’s lived for years guarding his son from flames and rivers. And now, after bringing him to the disciples and finding no help—he turns to Jesus with one last plea: *“If You can do anything...”*

Jesus immediately replies, *“If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.”*

What a powerful statement. Not *some* things, not *small* things—all things are possible. It’s not just His power—it’s our belief. It’s a partnership between divine authority and human faith.

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Verse 24:

And now comes one of the most honest, most heartfelt prayers in all of Scripture.

“Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, ‘Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!’”

What honesty. What humility. With tears streaming down his face, this father says, “I do believe—but I know I’m struggling. Help me.” And isn’t that all of us at times? Believing... but weak. Hoping... but unsure. And Jesus does not rebuke him—He responds to that honest faith.

Then, as the crowd gathers, Jesus speaks to the demon in verses 25 and 26:

“You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!”

This time, Jesus names the spirit for what it is—both deaf and dumb. And He doesn’t just command it to leave—He tells it never to return.

The spirit cries out, convulses the boy violently, and comes out. And then... silence. The boy lies still. So still, the crowd says, *“He is dead.”*

But he wasn’t dead. He was **reborn!**

Verses 27-28:

Jesus took him by the hand—just as He did with Jairus’s daughter—and lifted him up. *“And he arose.”*

Later, in the quiet of the house—perhaps Peter’s house—the disciples ask privately, *“Why could we not cast it out?”*

That’s the question, isn’t it?

Sometimes, we try, and it doesn’t happen. We pray, and nothing changes. We speak in Jesus’ name, and there’s no result. And we wonder—why?

We’ll look at Jesus’ answer in the next verse, but for now, let’s reflect on this and apply it to our lives:

We have access to the same Jesus.

We serve the same Lord.

We are filled with the same Holy Spirit.

And yet... when power seems missing, we must ask—are we walking in faith? Are we spiritually prepared?

Sometimes we say we believe—but our actions don’t follow. Sometimes our words are bold—but our hearts are hollow. The power was never in the disciples themselves—it was

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in the faith-filled obedience to the One who gave them the power. And it is the same with us. Our faith is not in ourselves it is in Jesus. Can Jesus accomplish this, whatever it is that we are praying to happen? We believe Jesus is able. We don't trust in ourselves to have a special power. It all depends on our faith and connection to Jesus.

Faith is the bridge between human helplessness and divine intervention. And when we, like that father, cry out honestly—"Lord, I believe, help my unbelief"—God meets us right where we are.

Let's pick up where we left off at **verses 29**:

The disciples had just experienced a very public failure. They couldn't cast out the demon from that young boy. The crowd saw it. The scribes ridiculed them. And now, finally alone with Jesus, probably in Peter's house, they ask the question they've been aching to ask:

"Why could we not cast it out?"

That's a good question. A necessary question. It's the question we ask when things don't go as expected—when prayers seem powerless, when spiritual effort feels empty.

And Jesus gives them a direct answer:

*"**This kind** can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."*

We must prepare our faith and belief in Jesus before the need arises. We must fill our hearts with God's Word. We must fast and depend on God every day.

Now don't miss what Jesus says—"**this kind**." That tells us there are different kinds of demonic resistance. This kind required **deeper spiritual preparation**—not just prayer, but fasting also. Some spiritual strongholds don't break by routine faith; they break through **consecrated dependence on God**. Jesus is saying there are levels of authority, and there are levels of surrender. What a special concept to our spiritual reality: we can become stronger in our faith to fight against stronger foes as we faithfully depend more on Jesus.

Now from there, we come to **verse 30**. Jesus and the disciples quietly pass through Galilee. He doesn't want anyone to know where they are. His public ministry is drawing to a close, and His focus now is on preparing the Twelve.

Jesus begins teaching something critical in **verses 31-32**:

"The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day."

This is not symbolic. It's not vague. It's plain. He tells them exactly what will happen—His betrayal, death, and resurrection.

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But what does the Bible say?

"They did not understand this saying and were afraid to ask Him."

They were afraid. Why? Because deep down, they knew this was bigger than they were ready to receive. It didn't match their expectations of the Messiah. And maybe... they didn't want it to be true.

Now here's where the story takes a turn in **verses 33-37**.

Jesus catches them arguing—not about theology, not about the resurrection—but about **who would be the greatest** in the kingdom.

He asks them directly, *"What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?"*

"But they're silent..." Why? Because they were embarrassed. "...for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest."

They were arguing about **status** while walking with the **Savior** who was preparing to suffer and die.

So Jesus sits down and teaches them something eternal:

"If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

Do you desire to be first, to become successful as a disciple of Christ? Here is the answer of what you need to do straight from the Creator Himself. Then, to make His point even clearer, He takes a child, places him in their midst, and says:

"Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

Now that's powerful. In Aramaic, the words **"child"** and **"servant"** are closely linked. Jesus is saying, *"If you want to be great in My kingdom, you must be willing to serve like a child—humble, lowly, overlooked, but essential."*

And when you receive someone with a childlike heart, you're not just receiving them—you're receiving **Christ Himself**, and even **the Father who sent Him**.

Then comes a moment of religious jealousy. In **verses 38-40**, John speaks up:

"Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us."

And Jesus answers with grace and wisdom:

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“Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side.”

The disciples had tried to stop a man who was **doing the very thing they had just failed to do**—casting out demons in Jesus’ name. They were territorial and exclusive. But Jesus corrects them. He teaches that **His kingdom is not about position or pedigree**, but about allegiance to His name and glory.

Now listen—this doesn’t mean doctrine doesn’t matter. But it does mean that we must not oppose faithful believers just because they’re not “in our group.”

Then Jesus brings it back to the heart of service. He says in **verse 41**:

“For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

A cup of water. That’s small. That’s ordinary. But in Jesus’ eyes, even the smallest act done in His name has **eternal value**. The next time you are handing out water bottles during a church activity or event remember these words from our King—you receive a reward for this act.

And then, He gives one of the strongest warnings in all the Gospels in **verse 42**:

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.”

He’s not just talking about physical children. He’s talking about **spiritual children—believers who are young in the faith**. He’s warning us: *Be careful how you treat others in the family of God. Don’t be a stumbling block. Don’t be a cause for offense. Don’t lead them away from Christ.*

Because God takes this seriously. Very seriously.

Church, as we reflect on these verses, we see three core truths rise to the surface:

1. **Some battles require deeper preparation**—through prayer, fasting, and dependence.
2. **True greatness in the kingdom comes through humility, service, and childlike faith.**
3. **Even the smallest act of love in Jesus’ name carries eternal reward—and the smallest sin against another believer carries eternal consequence.**

Let us live with hearts prepared, hands open to serve, and eyes set on Christ.

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Because the One who called us still says today:

“Whoever desires to be first, let him be the servant of all.”

And that, my friends, is the **path to greatness** in the eyes of Heaven.

Now we come to one of the most sobering parts of Mark chapter 9—a section that doesn’t whisper, but **warns**. A section where Jesus speaks with urgency and force about **sin**, about **hell**, and about the **radical measures** we must be willing to take to live holy lives.

Let’s start with this: the hand, the foot, the eye—these are not minor parts of the body. They are **valuable**, essential even. But Jesus says, if **any one of them** causes you to sin, *cut it off, pluck it out*.

Now, hear me clearly—Jesus is **not advocating for literal self-mutilation**. He’s not calling us to perform physical surgery. What He **is** doing is making a spiritual point with **graphic language**. Sin is not something to be **managed**—it is to be **cut off**. It is like a **cancerous tumor** in the body. If it’s not removed, it spreads. It infects. And it kills.

So in **Mark 9:43–48**, Jesus says:

“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched—where ‘Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’”

“And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell—into the fire that shall never be quenched.”

“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, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.”

Now friends, these are **serious statements**. This is Jesus speaking—not in parables, not in metaphors—but in **warning**. He repeats that line **three times**:

“Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”

He is quoting from **Isaiah 66:24**, describing the final fate of the wicked—an eternal, irreversible place of torment.

Yes, Jesus believed in **hell**. A real place. A place of judgment. A place of justice. A place of **eternal consequence**.

The word used here for “hell” is **Gehenna**. It’s derived from the **Valley of Hinnom**, a ravine just outside Jerusalem where **pagan kings like Ahaz** once burned children alive in sacrifice to the fire god **Molech**. In later years, that valley became a **garbage dump** where refuse

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and the bodies of criminals were burned—where the fire **never stopped** and the **worms never died**.

Jesus uses this terrifying image to communicate one truth: **hell is not temporary. It is forever.**

And Revelation 20:10 confirms it:

“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone... and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

This is not symbolic fire. This is **God’s righteous judgment** poured out on sin, on Satan, and on all who reject the salvation of Jesus Christ.

And that brings us to the urgency of our mission. If hell is real—and it is—then how critical is it that sinners trust Christ? How vital that believers warn a lost world? How urgent is our need to live holy lives?

Then Jesus shifts to another image: **salt and sacrifice**.

In **Mark 9:49–50**, He says:

“For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.”

Salt preserves. Salt purifies. In the Old Testament, every sacrifice had to be seasoned with salt before it could be placed on the altar (Leviticus 2:13: “With all your offerings you shall offer salt”). Jesus is telling us: if you're going to live for God, there will be **fire**—the fire of testing, of purification, of dying to self. But that fire doesn't destroy—this fire **refines**.

All people are faced with a choice—either **sacrifices seasoned with salt**, or we face the fire of hell. There is no middle ground.

So let me ask you this:

Would you rather endure the **fires of hell as a lost sinner**, or the **refining fire of God** as a living sacrifice for His glory?

Because you will face fire. One way or another. But one fire burns forever... the other makes you pure.

And so today, Jesus calls us to **decisive action**. Not halfway. Not compromised. But fully surrendered.

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Deal with sin.

Cut it off.

Remove the footholds.

And live for eternity.

Hell is real. Heaven is real.

And Jesus Christ is our only hope of rescue.

So let us go forward today not in fear, but in **faith**, warning the lost and walking in holiness, knowing the sacrifice we make here is nothing compared to the **glory that awaits us, all because of Christ's sacrifice for us.**