



# CANYON HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Series: Mark

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## Radical Amputation

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We are very much looking forward to this year's GO Week. I hope you are as well and will put that on your calendars. My name is Koby. I'm one of the worship pastors here, and I have the privilege of sharing God's Word with you today. I'm going to ask you to get your Bibles open to Mark, chapter 9.

Today's passage is an exceptionally light and uplifting one. It's one that should be very easy for us to read and apply, and, among many things, should offer to us that feeling you get when you stare into the Christmas tree on December 24 with sweatpants and a cup of hot chocolate. It should cause us to laugh a lot and, hopefully, as we walk out of here, we'll all just feel much better about ourselves as people, which is always a priority to the leadership of this church and to me.

The title of today's passage is *Radical Amputation*. Today's message is a call for each and every one of us to stare our sin in the face, to call it and recognize it for what it is, and then to do whatever is necessary to root it out of our lives, because the stakes are incredibly high. I'll be honest with you. As I prepared this passage, I've never felt a weight like I did when I started reading this one.

This is some serious and some heavy stuff, but I honestly believe the Lord is going to use this passage to call each and every one of us to radically amputate sin out of our lives. This passage is going to require that we all live differently an hour from now than we did an hour ago. I'm going to ask you a question throughout the morning and at the end of our time together, and that question is... *What is it that the Lord is asking you to radically amputate out of your life today?*

My hope is that at the end of our time we will both have the answer to that question and a plan of action moving forward, because I do believe the Lord will be faithful to convict us, because there is always sin we need to be working on. With that, I'm going to ask you all to stand for the reading of God's Word. Mark, chapter 9, beginning in verse 42:

**"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. 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, 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.' 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."** Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for your Word, which is truth. I pray, God, that you would prepare all of our hearts, Lord, my own included, for the work you are going to be doing. God, we believe it to be true when you say in your Word that you will faithfully bring to completion the work you have begun in each and every one of the hearts of your people. Lord, we believe today is part of that process, so may we be humble as we look at your Word and may we be ready to change in response to your Word. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

1. *Sin is serious.* By definition, *sin* is any willful violation of the will of God. Jesus said it would be better for us to start cutting off parts of our bodies than to allow us to continue to live in sin. He tells us our very eternities are at stake. Now, this may seem elementary, but I have found, at least in my own life, that while I oftentimes will admit this to be true with my mind, I fail to live like it's true in my daily life.

In order for us to really understand what Jesus is calling us to in this passage, we have to change the way we view sin. See, we don't get to view sin as the world sees sin. We have to force ourselves to see sin as God sees sin.

Over the years, most of you have become acquainted with my daughter, Dallas. She is 7 years old. Probably 2-4 years ago, somewhere in there, we were having our family devotion time one night. We were talking about sin and how God takes our sin away so we can go and spend eternity in heaven with him.

This really bothered Dallas. She said, "Well, why would Jesus take my sins away? Those are mine. I want those back!" First clue we had a problem. We said, "No, Sweetie. You don't understand. Jesus takes our sins away so we can go to heaven and be with him." She goes, "That's okay. I just won't go to heaven. I just want my sins back." She went on to make up a song in which the lyrics were, "Jesus took my sins away; now I just want my sins back." We had a real problem on our hands.

Now, two takeaways from this short story. First, I am killing it as the theological gatekeeper of my home. Secondly, Dallas grossly misunderstood sin. Dallas' response to sin was the product of her not truly understanding what it was. I would say most of us, by and large, do not understand

our sin. We know we don't understand our sin because we see the way we react to it. Our reactions to sin are what give us away.

We see glorified sinful lifestyles on TV and we look past them. We hear crude jokes and we laugh at them. We tell white lies or bold lies and we're quick to justify them. The ends justify the means. We view things we shouldn't view and we just tell ourselves, "It's okay. Everybody else does it too."

We talk about people we shouldn't talk about in a way that damages their reputations, but we say, "Hey, no. We're just speaking truth," or my favorite, "We're just sharing prayer requests." We are cruel, cutting, and sarcastic with our words and we say we're only joking. We harbor anger and resentment in our hearts and we blame it on the people we're angry at. We lust after men and women in the secret spaces of our minds and we tell ourselves we would never act on it.

This is how we view our sin, but that is not how our God views our sin. God views our sin as a personal assault on his holiness. Every sin we commit is a personal attack on his character and holiness. See, God sees our sin for what it truly is. He does not grade on the curve of human depravity.

God knows every time we sin, we are actually taking someone or something and we are placing it above him, on his throne. We are saying, "Right here, right now, what I am doing, my sin, is more important to me than what you did on the cross of Calvary." Now, we would never say that out loud with our words, but we proclaim it very boldly with our actions. Understand this. Your sin alone, just yours, was enough to require the death of the sinless Son of God. You did that. I did that.

I've asked you this before, but would you view your sin differently if every time you sinned the person you loved the most was stapled to a cross and let hang there for six hours as their life was literally drained from their body for a crime they didn't commit? I think if we did, we would view our sin differently. If that was my boy, if that was my 5-year-old Declan, I would take my sin a whole lot more seriously than I do, but that's how God sees sin, because that's what our sin required of him.

Yet while this truth is sobering, here's some hope. Our God meets us in our sin. He is the God who Romans 5:8 tells us demonstrated his own love for us **"...in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."** This is the God who set the plan of redemption in motion long before you or I were ever born, not because he had to, but simply because he wanted to because he delights in us as his children.

This plan of redemption required that he send his one and only Son to the earth to be tortured, humiliated, and murdered before his eyes, and yet in light of that sacrifice, he still stands by patiently as you and I sin each and every day, continually, in full view of his glory and majesty, like a jealous husband forced to stand and watch as his wife willingly commits adultery before his eyes.

He sees us as we minimize, justify, laugh at, and worship our sin, and yet in his patience and grace, Lamentations 3:22-23 tells us he remains the God who meets us each and every morning with new mercies, sufficient for the day. If you're thankful that your God is a merciful God, would you say amen? I love the words of Romans 5:20. "Where our sin was great, his grace abounds all the more." This is our God.

Sin is serious, and so here's the question... *What is the Lord asking you to radically amputate out of your life today?* I would challenge you to not minimize the sin that is being called to mind right now, because all sin required the blood of Jesus.

It doesn't matter whether you are a mass murderer or simply someone who covets something that's not theirs in the secret spaces of their mind. That required Jesus' blood. Do not minimize that sin. What sin is there that you know displeases God and mocks the cross of Christ? God is calling you today to surrender that to him, because sin is serious.

2. *It is our responsibility to remove sin from our lives.* The removal of sin from our lives is our responsibility. Verse 43:

**"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, 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'"**

Now, I want you to notice the directives here. If your foot or your hand causes you to sin, you're the one who's supposed to cut it out. If your eye causes you to sin, you are the one who needs to pluck it out. The expectation is that we will be the ones who will be doing the radical amputating in our lives.

Yet it also has to be noted here that Jesus is not calling us to start physically lopping off body parts. Jesus is speaking in hyperbole. This is not simply an issue of hands, eyes, and feet. It's the issue of the sins we commit with our hands, the places we go with our feet, and the things we see with our eyes.

Furthermore, the whole counsel of Scripture would say this is not really an issue of what we do externally. Really, this is an issue of our hearts. I want you to see this. Jesus says, in Matthew 15, verses 18-19, **"But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander."** See, this is not an issue of behavior modification. This is an issue of the heart.

This is so important. Matthew 15 exposes that the biggest barrier between us and radically amputating sin out of our lives is our failure to believe that what we are being called *to* is better than what we are being called *from*. Did you catch that? The biggest barrier to radically

amputating sin out of our lives is our failure to believe that what we are being called *to*, which is holiness and obedience, is better than what we are being called *from*, which is what sin deceptively promises.

In John 10:10, Jesus said, "**The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.**" Get this now. Radical amputation is not about depriving us of something we deserve or something that would be for our good. Radical amputation is about preserving us and bringing us abundant life.

If we view the pleasures of sin as better than the promises of God, we will never be able to obey the commands of Jesus for any length of time. It is only when we truly see the promises of God as better, as life-giving, that we will actually amputate sin from our lives. See, you and I sin not because we have to. When Jesus went to the cross, when he died and rose again, once and for all, he broke the bondage of sin. He broke our slavery to sin, so now, when you and I sin, it's not because we have to. It's because we want to.

All sin makes appealing promises, when in reality it has one goal and one purpose, and that is to destroy us. Pornography promises sexual gratification right here, right now, and the lie is that it only affects you. What that sin delivers is a life of slavery. It blows apart and completely destroys marriages, relationships, and intimacy for the person who's viewing it. It literally dismantles the lives and souls of the men and women, the sons and daughters, the people who are drawn into the creation of it. What it promises is not what it delivers.

The sin of gossip or slander promises popularity. People will want to know what you have to say. They'll be listening to you when you speak. Yet what it actually delivers is the shattering of trust. What it actually delivers is broken relationships as people pull away and distance themselves from you for fear of what you might say about them behind their backs.

The sin of theft, which comes in so many different forms, promises provision that the Lord has not provided, but it delivers, when it is exposed (and Proverbs 10:9 says it will be exposed), is shame and embarrassment.

A few of you might remember one of the last times I preached. I shared with you a run-in I had with T-Mobile, where they were desperately trying to give me two phones I did not pay for or order. Anyway, we got all of that worked out, but for some reason, the Lord sees fit to continue to test my wife and me in this exact same area. This has happened four times now since that time I preached it.

The most recent was we've kind of been in project mode around the house. We redid our floors. We redid our fireplace because my son, in spectacular fashion, used a chair as a battering ram and caved the tile in underneath our fireplace. It was truly incredible, but it needed to be replaced, so at HomeDepot.com, I ordered these four slabs of concrete, these hearthstones that for some reason cost about \$130. I had them delivered and installed. It looked great.

Then I got an email, and it said, "Hey, we've received your request for a return and refund. When we receive the product, we'll be sure to issue you your money." I thought, "That's weird. I never requested that, but hey, they're still in my living room. It has to be just a mistake email on their part."

Three days go by. I get another email that says, "Hey, we've received your hearthstones in our warehouse. We've issued your refund. It should be in your account in one to three business days." At this point, I'm like, "Come on! These aren't small. These are giant rocks in my living room!"

My wife and I get in the car. We head to Home Depot and I talk to the very nice lady behind the counter. I'm like, "This is a weird deal. You guys have paid me for something that I still have and I have to find a way to pay you money for something you're not going to give me, so can we somehow work this out?" After half an hour of talking with her and going on the phone, I finally convinced them to take my money back and we got the whole thing ironed out.

Now, what was being promised in that moment was \$130 that the Lord had not provided. I may have even been able to make the case that this was the Lord blessing us for our faithfulness in the past, but the thing is, the Lord does not bless through theft. What was being promised, when it was exposed, would have actually delivered embarrassment and shame on me, my family, my church, and my God.

See, this is what Jesus is calling us to. He's saying there is nothing we should be unwilling to cut out of our lives to honor and obey him, believing it is better, even if it is something as important as a hand, an eye, a foot, a hearthstone, \$130, or \$130,000, whatever it ends up being. We have to believe this is for our good and for his glory, not for our deprivation. We must believe what God promises is better than what sin promises.

While that is a daunting challenge, here's the hope. God will never call you anywhere he won't also go with you. God will never require of you that which he will not empower you to accomplish. Yes, we need to do the work to root sin out of our lives, but that's not in our own power. That's in his power. That's the only way we will ever find lasting victory in this area.

So, I will ask you again. What is it that God is calling you to amputate out of your life today? What lie are you believing? Is there any space in your heart where you believe what your sin will deliver is truly better than what God will deliver, the God who loved you so much he sent his Son to die in your place? Our sin is serious. We have been called to radically amputate sin out of our lives.

3. *Eternity hangs in the balance.* Jesus tells us, in no uncertain terms, here in Mark 9, it would be better for us to enter life with one hand, one foot, or one eye than to be thrown into hell where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. See, this is ultimately why how we handle our sin should matter to us and call us to action today.

Jesus is telling us that how we approach sin truly reveals the state of our souls. There are some of you here today who are sitting in this room who believe in your heart that you have a relationship with Christ but your callousness toward your sin should call you to question whether or not your faith is real. Do you know Jesus or do you just know a lot about him?

I've heard so many times phrases like, "Yes, I'm sleeping with my girlfriend," "Yes, I drink too much," and even, "Yes, I am a practicing homosexual, but listen. God knows my heart. God knows me. God understands me. God and I are good." Scripture would confront you this morning and say, "No, you're not. Your callousness and unwillingness to deal with your sin gives you away."

I want you to see 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Paul writes, "**Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?**" That is a statement of fact. Then he goes on to say, "**Do not be deceived...**" Do not believe the lies you are being told.

**"...neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."**

That is who we once were. That is not who we are anymore. Those who truly understand the gospel are no longer content to remain in their sin. Hear me say this loud and clear. Jesus' blood can and does wash, sanctify, and justify even the worst of sinners. It's not the absence of sin in our lives that is a testimony to our salvation. It is our attitude and our action toward our sin that is a testimony to our salvation.

We can either hear the words of Jesus and respond by going to battle and rooting out the sin that is in our lives, or we can choose to ignore his words, justify our sin, and prove with our calloused hearts that our faith is not real. Now, while this can be hard to hear, here's the hope. I am not standing here before you today saying that if there is any sin in your life then you are not saved. If that was the case, we would all be in a lot of trouble and I would be at the front of that line. Yet I will ask you this. Do you hate your sin?

Pastor Mark Barrett is no longer on staff here. He pastors another church. He disciplined me every week for four and a half years, and he would ask me regularly, "Koby, do you hate your sin?" That's an important question to be able to answer, because Jesus is saying here that our willingness to obediently and radically amputate sin in our lives will reveal the state of our hearts and the trajectory of our eternities.

So, I ask you again, what is the Lord calling you to radically amputate out of your life today? Our sin is serious. God has called us to take responsibility for and deal with our sin because ultimately our eternities hang in the balance. So where do we go from here? This is one of those passages which I believe requires action from each and every one of us in this room today.

I believe there are three different types of people represented here today, but before we get to those, I think it's important to note that regardless of what category you fall in, no matter who you are or where you are, your plan of action... We are all in the same boat.

The next three things are things we are all in together, so I want you to write these three words down, because this is your plan of action. Step one is *listen*, step two is *confess*, and step three is *change*. This is what the Lord is calling each and every one of us to today. So, jumping right into the first category of people:

First, *those of us who are dabbling in sin*. Now, at the very least, this is all of us. If you cannot admit that you are dabbling with some kind of sin, you and I need to have a whole different conversation. This, at the very minimum, is all of us. Your life might not be enslaved to sin, but you know there is something in your life that does not ultimately honor God and does ultimately mock the cross of Christ. God is calling you to give that up today.

Just an example of how this played out... A couple of years ago, Pastor Steve preached a message that had a similar call to it at the end. He said, "What is it that the Lord is calling you to give up?" I remember, because I was sitting in the front row of those back bleachers. I was praying, and it was like a light bulb went on in that prayer.

"What is God asking you to give up?" Immediately, the name of a show I had just started binge-watching in the middle of the night with my insomniac twins came to mind. It wasn't like a light suggestion. It was beyond a shadow of a doubt. The Lord was saying, "This is yours, Koby. This is what you need to give up," and I had a choice. In that moment, would I listen to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, or would I choose to ignore it?

By the grace of God, I chose to listen, but that forced me into the second step, *confession*. I had to go to my wife, I had to go to my Life Group guys and say, "Look, guys. This is what the Lord has asked me to give up, and I need you to keep me accountable. I need you guys to ask me the tough questions to make sure I've left this piece of my life behind.

Then I had to *change*, step three. It's not enough to just commit to it mentally. We have to actually make a difference, and so I would say to every single one of you sitting here, whatever that sin is, there is no better time to get out of it than right now, because the longer we indulge any sin, the firmer its hold becomes on our lives and the harder it becomes to break, so there is no day like today. What sin is there in your heart that you need to put a stake in and move on from? Listen, confess, and change.

The second group of people are *those of us who are sitting in this room and are enslaved to sin but hate it*. There are some of you who are sitting in this room and your life has become dominated by sin. You are entrenched in habits and behavior you know are destructive and you hate it, but you don't know how to get out of it.



Listen. My heart has been heavy for you specifically since the moment I started reading this passage. There has been a weight on my heart and soul that I've never experienced, because I knew you would be sitting here today and I want you to hear that there is hope.

First Corinthians 10:13 says, "**No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.**" You have to hear that today. God is faithful, and with every temptation, he will provide the way of escape for the sole purpose, this one reason: that you would be able to endure it.

The Lord is not going to leave you to your own abilities, but his Spirit will empower you as he transforms you into the person he has designed you to be. This road will be humbling. Hear me say that. Full disclosure: it will be a humbling road, but when the stakes are this high, it is a road well worth walking.

So, step one, you have to listen. If you're in this category, man, the moment we started reading this passage of Scripture, you knew exactly what sin the Lord was calling out. You have to be faithful to listen. Do not silence the convicting voice of the Holy Spirit.

Then, you have to confess. You have to confess it as sin, both to the Lord and to the people you have sinned against. You have to bring in people around you who are willing to ask you the tough questions to make sure you are staying the course. It saddens me that so often, in our pride and our desire to be seen by other people as something other than what we actually are, we opt for isolation when it comes to our sin because we're embarrassed.

We don't want anybody else to know, "I, of all people, deal with this sin," so we hold it close to the vest. We don't tell anyone about it, but listen. God does not expect you to be perfect or he wouldn't have sent Jesus. The godly men and women in the communities around you cannot expect you to be perfect. Otherwise, they grossly misunderstand the gospel. So, can we all, just for a minute, here, of all places, just admit we're not perfect? Could we confess?

Then, we have to change. We have to actually do something about it. With the people who are holding you accountable, you have to put together a practical, concrete plan of action. This is not simply, "I'm just going to read my Bible and pray more." There's nothing wrong with that. In fact, those two things are paramount, but your plan for action has to be far more practical and comprehensive than that.

Here's the example. If I stood before you today and my life-enslaving sin was pornography, I know I use this. It has been pointed out to me. I use this example a lot, but the reality is it is one of the most pervasive sins in our culture, and it's not just outside the church. It is in the church and it is no longer just a male issue; it is a female issue as well.

There's a reason why this is something that gets addressed. I want to take us out of the traditional form of this sin. I want to throw in there things like *Game of Thrones* and shows on Showtime and HBO that are the exact same thing, they just have a better plot behind them.

So, if I were to stand before you today and that were my issue, here's what my plan of action would be. First, I would memorize Psalm 119:9-11. The psalmist writes, "**How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!**" Then, I love what the psalmist writes. He says, "**I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.**"

Scripture is the go-to. Scripture is like the ammo in the Holy Spirit's gun. We have to be entrenched in it. It is our hope. Yet it goes beyond that. If that's my issue, then I have to be willing to go to extreme lengths. Maybe I look at it and go, "You know what? I have to find some way to do without internet at work." Maybe it's without internet at home. Maybe I'm putting necessarily restrictive things on my devices. Anything I can do to make it harder for me to succumb to this sin.

Then, it's going to require that if I'm not in a Life Group that I get in a Life Group. If I'm already in a Life Group then I'm going to be honest with my Life Group, because they cannot help me if I'm not honest with them about what's going on.

Our counseling department loves it when I do this, but we have free counseling in the next building over for attenders and members of Canyon Hills Community Church. It is humbling to walk in those doors, but I wish you could hear all the stories, all the victories of people walking out of that building, having overcome their life-enslaving sins in the power of Christ. It is remarkable.

Do not, in your pride, believe the lie that living in secrecy and darkness is going to provide something better for you than walking into the light. There is hope. Now, that may not be your issue, but whatever your issue is, your plan has to be that practical. Measurable, pass/fail, things people can hold you accountable to.

There are those of us who are dabbling in sin and those of us who are enslaved to sin but hate it, and this is the final category: *those who are enslaved to sin and love it*. If this is you, you may not even know you love it, but if you are in this category, your reaction today to what is being preached is going to give you away. You know there is sin in your life. You know deep down that what you are doing offends God and mocks the cross of Christ, and yet you aren't willing to give it up.

You sit here in church, some of you, each and every Sunday. You sing the songs, take Communion, and sit through the messages, but you have found every reason why you shouldn't have to or don't have to make any actual changes to the way you live your life. There is hope for you, but not before there is warning and confrontation.

If you do not change, you will knowingly and willingly walk your way into the judgment of almighty God, and he is not the God who laughs at your sin. He is not the God who thinks little of your sin. He is not the God who knows your heart and thinks you're good. This is the God whom Matthew, chapter 7, says one day will stare you in the face and say, "Depart from me. I

never knew you, you worker of lawlessness," and you will be cast into an eternal separation and torment from him.

I want to circle back. You'll notice we didn't talk about verse 42, but I want to circle back to that right now. If you look back at your text, Jesus said, **"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea."** There is a special warning here for those who would knowingly draw someone else into their sin, especially a child.

Sin loves company. I think this is especially aimed at the people who fit in this category who would make themselves feel better about the way they are living by inviting other people to join them in their sin. Don't miss this. Jesus says it would be better for you if a giant stone was tied around your neck and you were thrown into the deepest parts of the Puget Sound.

Listen to the Holy Spirit's conviction right now. Do not ignore him. Confess before God. There is no sin the blood of Jesus cannot cover. First John 1:9 says, **"If we confess our sins [to God], he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** You are not too far gone. You need to turn from your sin and turn to Jesus. You need to believe that what Christ offers is better than what sin offers. The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. Jesus came that you may have life and have it abundantly, but you have to make a choice.

Do not ignore Jesus' call today, but finally, you need to change. The heart that truly turns from sin and turns to Christ cannot help but change. The change is the fruit of our conversion. You've heard this from the pulpit over and over again. Faith that does not change you does not save you. So, here's the truth. We cannot do this on our own.

I want to make sure that is said loud and clear. This is not a call to live perfectly without sin in our lives. We cannot earn the favor of God through the things we do, but that's the beauty of the gospel. That's the whole point. We are unable to live the lives the justice of God demands, so Jesus, in his grace, love, and mercy, came to the earth to live the life we could never live and to die the death we deserve so we could be made right with God.

You have to get this. We do not radically amputate sin out of our lives in order to earn the favor of God. We radically amputate sin out of our lives because we already have the favor of God. When we understand the gospel, his love for us and his hatred for sin, how could we want anything more than to honor him with the obedience out of our deep sense of gratitude?

As we conclude, I just want to look back at our text one last time. In verses 49-50, Jesus says, **"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."** This is a fitting way for Jesus to conclude our passage today.

See, salt doesn't lose its saltiness on its own. It's far too stable of a compound for that to happen. Salt loses its saltiness when it's contaminated. Jesus is saying, "Don't let your life be contaminated by sin. Do not let your testimony be spoiled and contaminated by sin." We have to

cut it out. Sin is serious. God has called us to remove that sin from our lives because our very eternities hang in the balance. Let's pray.

Father God, I am thankful for your Word and thankful for your truth. Lord, admittedly, these words are hard to hear and hard to speak. Lord, it is never fun to be forced to stare the reality and the heinousness of our sin in the face, but it is only when we do that that your grace truly comes into focus. So, God, I pray that you would both convict and encourage every heart in this room. Lord, I pray that wherever there is sin, you would shine a light on that sin and that we would be a people faithful to listen to your voice. Would you show us where you need us to change, God?

Would you just take a moment and ask the Lord to reveal your sin to you right now? Don't silence that voice and don't ignore what he says. Let's do that together.

Father, I pray that we, in humility, would receive what you show us and that we wouldn't be content to see it and walk away but that we would see our sin, confess our sin, and ultimately change. God, I pray against the spirit of discouragement.

Lord, the Enemy would love to tell us we are too far gone, that there is no hope, but that is not true, and so I pray that you would remind each and every heart here today that while you are calling all of us into the light, you are walking with us as we go. Father, may we lean into you as our strength, as our hope, as our refuge, and as our shield, because more than anything we need you. In Jesus' name, amen.