

## The Disciple's Greatest Danger

Mark 9:42-48

## The Civil War Minie Ball



## "Essential Lessons for Every Disciple"

- I. True greatness in Christ's kingdom is defined by humility (33-37).
- II. The kingdom of God is greater than your experience of it (38-41).
- III. Sin is always our greatest danger (42-48).
  - A. Causing others to sin (42)
  - B. Tolerating personal sin (43-48)

## Our Lord is not saying...

- 1) The physical body is inherently evil.
  - Contra. 1 Cor. 6:13, 19-20
  - Cf. Phil. 1:20 - according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but *that* with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.
- 2) Sin is primarily physical.
  - Contra. 2 Cor. 7:1 - Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
  - 1 John 2:15ff - "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

## Our Lord is not saying...

- 3) Physical mutilation can protect us from sin or accomplish true spiritual change.
  - The OT strictly forbade masochism and mutilation of the body.
  - Cf. Deut. 14:1; 23:1; 1 Kings 18:28
- 4) There is real spiritual value in asceticism.
  - Col. 2:20-23

## Six affirmations about sin's danger and what we must be willing to do.

- 1) Tolerating our own sin is the greatest danger to our souls.
- 2) Eternal punishment in hell is a reality.

## Only Two Alternatives After Death

- 1) "Enter life" (43, 45; Matt. 18:8, 9); "enter the kingdom of God" (47)
- 2) "To go into hell" (43); "to be cast into hell" (45, 47); "to be cast into eternal fire" (Matt. 18:8); "to be cast into the fiery hell" (Matt. 18:9)

## Hell-fire

- "the fire" (Matt. 3:10; 7:19)
- "unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:12)
- "the fiery hell" (Matt. 5:22)
- "the furnace of fire" (Matt. 13:42, 50)
- "the eternal fire" (Matt. 18:8; 25:41)
- "the fiery hell" (Matt. 18:9)
- "the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries" (Heb. 10:27)
- "the punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7)
- "the lake of fire which burns with brimstone" (Rev. 19:20)
- "the lake of fire and brimstone" (Rev. 20:10)
- "the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15)
- "the lake that burns with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21:8)

## Gehenna

- Cf. "the Gehenna of fire" (Matt. 18:9)
- Aramaic form of Hebrew "Ge Ben-Hinnom."
- Means "the valley of the son(s) of Hinnom"
  - (also called Topheth; 2 Kings 23:10; Is. 30:33; Jer. 7:31-32; 19:6).
  - A valley southwest of Jerusalem, outside the city walls.
- OT
  - Children were offered in the fire there to false gods (Jer. 19:2-6).
  - Josiah declared the place to be unclean (2 Kings 23:10).
- NT
  - The garbage dump for the city of Jerusalem.
  - A trash fire constantly burned.
  - Infested with maggots.
- So Jesus uses the word often to describe hell.
  - Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5

## Jesus Here Denies...

- The mortality of the soul
- Universalism—that all will be saved.
- Second chance or second probation—the mistaken idea that "in the intermediate state salvation will again be offered to those who died without Christ."
- Annihilationism—that unbelievers will ultimately be completely destroyed and cease to exist.

## Six affirmations about sin's danger and what we must be willing to do.

- 1) Tolerating our own sin is the greatest danger to our souls.
- 2) Eternal punishment in hell is a reality.
- 3) Sin is what will ultimately send a person to hell.
  - Cf. Matt. 25:41-46—omission
  - Cf. Rev. 21:8—commission
- 4) Nothing is more important than your soul's eternal destiny.

## Six affirmations about sin's danger and what we must be willing to do.

- 5) We must hate sin in all its forms and be willing to kill it in us, whatever the cost.
  - Cf. Rom. 8:13; 13:14; 1 Cor. 9:27; Col. 3:5
  - Cf. Rom. 8:13 - for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
  - Cf. Phil. 2:12-13 - work out your salvation with fear and trembling;<sup>13</sup> for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.
- 6) The ultimate goal we pursue is a pure and holy heart.
  - Matt. 5:27-30
  - Cf. Rom. 8:29 - those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.

## What Must We Do?

- 1) Examine the reality of our faith.
- 2) Amputate from our lives anything that we know regularly tempts us to sin.
  - Hand – what a person does.
  - Foot – where a person goes.
  - Eye – what a person sees.

## Spiritual Amputation: A Case Study

- The Internet
  - Pornography
  - Pursuing a sinful relationship.
- Cutting off the sin...
  - 1) Install safe-surfing software, like Covenant Eyes or Net Nanny.
  - 2) Place the computer in a public area of the house.
  - 3) Have someone else control the password for logging on.
  - 4) Don't use the computer when you're alone or others in bed asleep.
  - 5) Get rid of the internet altogether.
  - 6) Get rid of the computer.