IF ANYONE CAUSES THESE LITTLE ONES TO STUMBLE

Mark 9:42-50

Key Verse 42a

 “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble,

**Introduction**



 Last week's passage ends with verse 41, “Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.” The disciples of Jesus are very precious to God. Therefore, if anyone serves the disciples a cup of water in the name of Jesus, God will reward him or her. Likewise, when we serve God’s flock in Jesus’ name, we will certainly not lose our reward either. When we are united with others in the name of Jesus, we have His great reward in heaven. As Jesus promised his reward for unity and serving in his name, so there is a punishment. When people do not repent and keep on living self-centered life, they become a stumbling block to others. Many people often casually say, “What you do is your business and what I do is my business.” People often don’t take into consideration how their influence might affect those around them. They think they can be neutral. But you are either influencing or influenced. And we can cause others to sin by not doing anything. This happens when we don’t become a witness for Jesus. May the Lord help us to become men and women of good influence so that we may build up a body of Christ!

1. Read verses 42-44. Why is it such a grave sin to cause little ones to stumble? (42) Name examples where a person’s hands might cause them to stumble. (43a) What should we do in order to enter eternal life? (43b, 44)

1-1, Read verses 42-44.

42 “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. 43 If your hand causes you to stumble, 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] [[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+9&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24583b)]

1-2, Why is it such a grave sin to cause little ones to stumble? (42)

***42 “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble,***

* Jesus is very much concerned for the little ones who just believe in Jesus. It is because they are very vulnerable and weak.
* Jesus warned the disciples not to be a stumbling block through their self-centered way of thinking and care-free life.

***it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea.***

* On that day, there were two different sizes of millstones. The smaller one was used by a woman to grind a small amount of grain.
* The larger one was turned by a donkey to grind a larger amount of grain. Jesus referred to the larger kind of millstone here.
* A little child is easily influenced by others. Likewise, those who are spiritually young are easily misled by bad influence.
* It takes months or years to build a house, but it takes only a few minutes to burn it down. Likewise, raising up disciples of Jesus requires great persistence, prayer and Bible teaching, but causing others to sin can be done in a few days or weeks.
* Causing others to sin is a very serious offense to God. Jesus said emphatically that it would be better for such persons to have a large millstone around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea and stay there forever so that they would not cause them to stumble again. What a warning!

1-3, Name examples where a person’s hands might cause them to stumble. (43a)

***43 If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off.***

* In our times, our hands and fingers can cause us to commit sin such as gambling, watching pornography, and so on.

1-4, What should we do in order to enter eternal life? (43b, 44)

***It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. [44] [***[***b***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+9&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24583b)***]***

* James 1:15b says, “…and sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death.” So we must deal with sin drastically as soon as possible. We must cut off our sins and throw them away immediately as we throw away our stinking garbage without reservation.
* In our times, people do not think sins very seriously. But it is dangerous to have them grow in us. Daily fighting our sins is a matter of life and death instead of postponing it.
1. Read verses 45-47. Name examples where a person’s feet might cause them to stumble? (45a) What should we do to enter eternal life? (45b, 46) Name examples of where a person’s eyes might cause them to commit sin? (47a) How much do we have to struggle to enter the kingdom of God? (47b)

2-1, Read verses 45-47.

 And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. [46] [[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+9&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24585c)] 47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, 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,

2-2, Name examples where a person’s feet might cause them to stumble? (45a)

 ***And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off.***

* One young man just accepted Jesus. When he was walking on a street, his girlfriend, who used to commit immoral sin with him, greeted him.
* He did not greet her back; however, ran away from her and never met her again. He was Saint Augustine who influenced believers greatly since then.
* One’s desire easily directs his or her feet to commit sins. After accepting Jesus Christ, a shepherdess still went to clothing stores and bought unnecessary luxury clothings. She later repented of her desire and committed herself to Jesus.

2-3, What should we do to enter eternal life? (45b, 46)

 ***It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. [46] [***[***c***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+9&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24585c)***]***

* Jesus emphasizes how important it’s to enter eternal life although it means that we have to sacrifice to avoid sins.
* It is very important to keep us pure from God’s sight rather than focus on wholesomeness outside looking.

2-4, Name examples of where a person’s eyes might cause them to commit sin? (47a)

***47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out.***

* Our eyes can be compared to the windows or doors of the buildings, through which we can see and develop further desires.
* When we see people who live according to their natural desire and greed, we are tempted to do the same instead of participating in the remaining sufferings of Christ.
* But we better fix our eyes on Jesus who is the author of our faith. Rather than being driven by transient desires, we can deny ourselves and follow Jesus Christ.

2-5, How much do we have to struggle to enter the kingdom of God? (47b)

***It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,***

* Sin is not to be taken lightly. What can we do? We are tempted constantly by sin. We are in danger of losing all our body parts.
* How can we escape hell and enter the kingdom of heaven? With our own effort it is impossible.
* But by faith in Jesus we are able. Because Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead, his blood can make our hearts clean.
* After we have confessed our faith in Jesus we need to offer our body parts for the work of God.
1. Read verses 48-50. Describe what hell looks like. (48, 49) What happens to salt if it loses its saltiness? (50a) As Christians, how can we retain our saltiness? (50b)

3-1, Read verses 48-50.

48 where

“‘the worms that eat them do not die,

 and the fire is not quenched.’[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+9&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24587d)]

49 Everyone will be salted with fire.

50 “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”

3-2, Describe what hell looks like. (48, 49)

***48 where***

***“‘the worms that eat them do not die,***

 ***and the fire is not quenched.’[***[***d***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+9&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24587d)***]***

* The message of Jesus in verse 48 and 49 is clear: knowing how terrible hell is, it is worth any sacrifice to avoid.
* Therefore, we cannot think of the kingdom of God just in the context of reward; we must also think in terms of sacrifice.

 ***49 Everyone will be salted with fire.***

* Everyone will be tested through fire. Through trials of life, we will be tested whether we are self-centered or God-centered.
* There can be two reactions; one will repent and become God-centered person or stubbornly live in self-centered life and experience hellish life.
* True disciples of Jesus will repent their self-centered heart and self-glory seeking life. They become a salty Christian through trials of life.

3-3, What happens to salt if it loses its saltiness? (50a)

***50 “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again?***

3-4, As Christians, how can we retain our saltiness? (50b)

***Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”***

* Jesus tells his disciples to be salty Christians. In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus told his disciples, “You are the salt of the earth…” (Matt.5:13)
* Salt in Jesus’ time was used as a preservative because they didn’t have refrigeration. Salt is a preservative. It is also a flavoring.
* What Jesus means here is that his disciples must preserve the faith and be able to influence the whole world with the gospel.
* This is our role. Soon Jesus would suffer, and be crucified. He will rise from the dead and ascend into heaven. He will no longer be physically present with them. They must learn the way to be the salt of the world by listening to him.
* Though they are only a small number in comparison with the large Roman Empire, Jesus believed that his disciples would one day influence the world. They were able to do so because they imitated Jesus’ life.

**Conclusion**

 In this passage we have seen the way Jesus taught his disciples to be salty Christians. As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the disciples argued as to who among them would be the greatest. They fought and fought, and had no peace with each other. He did not want them to argue and fight and be influenced by the ungodly Roman world. He wanted them to be humble servants of each other. He also wanted them to welcome the weak and helpless people. He also wanted them to have a clear attitude against causing others to sin, especially the young believers and young people. This is the way he wanted them to be salty Christians. For us to be salty means we need to accept Jesus’ way of true greatness. We need to serve the little children and live a humble life. This is being an influence. We try to copy Jesus’ sacrificial life. We don’t live just to eat and sleep and enjoy our salvation. We live to be like Jesus and be an influence. May God help us to be salty Christians so we can influence our campus like Jesus. May God help you to be truly great by serving like Jesus.

**One word: A Servant, Jesus!**