

Our title this evening is a direct quote from Jesus. Before we investigate where this quote is found, what is your initial response to this question: “What is Jesus talking about?” I have asked several people to interpret Jesus’ words based purely on this phrase, and there are a wide variety of possibilities. But when we look at it word for word, usually a common interpretation emerges.

“Everyone” – Clearly this is something that will happen to every person.

“will be” – At least when Jesus said it, it was something yet to happen to every person.

“salted” – (*Matthew 5:13*) – That means to be “preserved” and is most often used in a positive way.

“with fire” – (*1 Peter 1:7; 4:12-13*) – Okay, this must be the idea of “tested by fire” or proving faith through the “fiery ordeal” of Christian living.

Okay, that was easy enough. Jesus is saying that everyone will face trials in their life and if they are to be preserved (saved), then it will be by proven character. If this is what it is saying, I can build a great sermon around that idea.

Daniel 3:17-18 – I could talk about the 3 men who stood firm in their faith and were literally preserved by God because they faced the fiery furnace with such faithfulness.

James 1:2-3 – Mix in a little attitude information. We should approach the fires of life with resolve and as an opportunity to prove who we are in Christ.

And then of course we would make specific application to the trials in your life and mine. And, our lesson would be the truth. And it would clearly be accurate to the harmony of what the Bible teaches. But long after 100 people streamed it online and we talked about ways to use the lesson, one fact would remain: **I have completely butchered the context!** At the very least, I have proven my position by context. Hey, we are 5 minutes into this lesson and we don’t even know where the verse is found yet!

This is a common mistake in Bible study. Once you press on past simple Bible reading and start to consider how to determine the meaning of passages, there are some rules that must be applied. The second rule is HARMONY. You go to other passages, as I did, and harmonize your position. But the first and foremost rules is: CONTEXT! What is the point being made in the passage itself!

I. **CONTEXT (*Mark 9:42-49*)**

- a. Sometimes we forget the simplest step to Bible study: Read.
- b. Some of you may have thought about HELL when I first introduced the verse tonight. Most minds would not have gone to that, perhaps because “figurative” interpretation of the Bible in modern times has lead our minds away from things like the Realities of Hell!
- c. But notice: (**v43, 44, 46, 48**) – Fire is mentioned in each of these verses and every time it is talking about eternal punishment!
- d. Now we come to **Mark 9:49**. To say that Jesus is now speaking of the fiery ordeals and trials of life... well, that would not be consistent with His message, would it?
- e. So what is Jesus saying here? Well we have more study to do, especially with regard to that word “**everyone**,” but His point is not to be missed. It seems that our initial view of “**salt**” is accurate: a preservation in a certain state. But in this text, that state is IN HELL!
- f. I will then go on record as saying: No matter what, I do not want to be salted with fire!
- g. Let’s continue to dig into the text, but also introduce the value of another tool:

II. CONTRAST (*Mark 9:49 – KJV*)

- a. Very often Jesus and His teachers use contrast, (comparing one group to another), to make a point. And such is the case here. Interesting, it becomes more clear when we check another VERSION of the Bible. This is a tremendous tip for Bible study!
- b. *“For ever-one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.”*
- c. This text is not about what everyone would incur together, but TWO sets of people. Every ONE who fits in one category will be burned with fire, and every ONE who fits into another category, called “sacrifice,” will be salted with salt.
- d. I’ll tell you now: I’m liking that second category better. Being preserved with preservation!
- e. Let’s see going back through the context if we can see a contrast between two groups:
 - i. V42 – “Whoever” causes one of these little ones to stumble.
 - ii. V43 – Those who make the SACRIFICE and those who DON’T.
 - iii. V45 – Those who make the SACRIFICE and those who DON’T.
 - iv. V47 – Those who make the SACRIFICE and those who DON’T.
- f. I am seeing something here. There are those who will do what it takes to be the proper influence on their fellow believers and there are those who will not!
 - i. Every ONE must make the choice to be the sinner of verse 42 or the Sacrifice!
 - ii. With that information in tow, we are ready for the vital next step:

III. CONCLUSION

- a. Okay, so what is the conclusion? Not my conclusion, that I thought when I first read the verse. Not the conclusion that I need to make my sermon on “fiery ordeals” work.
- b. What does our passage actually mean in its context? What is Jesus teaching us?
 - i. **“Everyone”** is not every person, but **“whoever”** causes others to stumble.
 1. **Matthew 18:6** makes the same point in a different way.
 2. People who speak and act in a way that causes others to lose their faith and their soul will be forever preserved, but in the fires of damnation.
 - ii. **“Every Sacrifice will be salted with salt.”**
 1. There are those who will make the personal sacrifice. There are those who will keep quiet, give something up, make concessions, to help Jesus’ little ones keep their faith and their souls.
 - a. May be as simple as NOT BEING JUDGMENTAL – (Mark 9:38)
 - b. Or a willingness to give and receive FELLOWSHIP – (Mark 9:41)
 - c. Swallowing pride and just serving and being served and putting our common faith in Jesus above all else!
 2. That person will be salted with salt. That person will be preserved by Jesus with everlasting preservation: heaven!
 - iii. (**Mark 9:50**) – Jesus Himself provides the final conclusion:
 1. If you are that person, that sacrificial, loving, humble servant, please do not become jaded or prideful or affected and give that up! It is a quality that takes time to build and is very difficult to restore.
 2. **Matthew 5:13** – This starts among us! With treatment of Jesus’ little ones!
 3. Have salt in you. Preserve one another through peace and love. This will:
 - a. Keep them and you from the fires of hell.
 - b. This leads to being salted with salt: preserved in heaven forever.

Jesus has a way of knowing exactly what we need. Perhaps we can all use lessons on “fiery trial” and facing them to preserve your soul. But in this text, Jesus knew we needed to contemplate the realities of a place called Hell. We needed to know that every one who lives for self will go there. But every-one who lives to honor God and help tender souls get to heaven will be saved. Which one are you?