

Pluck it out

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[0 : 0 0] Matthew chapter 18, we read it, verses 8 and 9. Wherefore, if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off and cast them from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life, opt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hellfire.

There are so many things we could unpack just in these two verses here. And I realise that it's often the case people are expecting to say, well of course Jesus doesn't actually literally mean cut off your hands and feet and pluck out your eyes.

Because that would be way too savage. Well in one sense, it's true that Jesus doesn't mean it literally to pluck out your eyes and chop off your hands and feet. But not because it's too savage.

But rather because it doesn't go far enough. It's not actually your hand or your foot that causes you to sin, is it? It's the heart and the mind and the thought and what drives the hands and the feet.

[1 : 1 2] And you look with whether sinful thought or sinful desire or whatever upon that which your heart desires. If there is that which you look at and you have no thought or no commonest idea or no lust towards it or whatever, then you just pass on and you look at something else.

It's no use tearing out the eye and chopping off the hand and saying, that's me sorted. Because if it is merely that which is to do with the flesh, then the flesh is easily curtailed.

But the heart or the spirit where sin so often really resides. Jeremiah says, you know, the heart of man is deceitful above measure and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? That's where the real attention needs to be focused. We know, for example, that Romans teaches us in Romans 8 verse 13.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die. But if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, that means put them to death, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

[2 : 2 1] For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Now what's the thing about the spirit of fear here that's being talked about in Romans?

I would suggest to you that one application of it is not simply, oh, being afraid of our enemies and being afraid of the devil and being afraid of this or that. It's the fear of actually confronting our own sinful desires.

The spiritual equivalent of chopping off the hand or the foot or plucking out the eye. It's not about dealing with the flesh. It's not about chopping off a hand or tearing out the eye as though that is going to solve it somehow.

In Matthew 23, if we were to turn a page or two, we find what Jesus says about the fantasies and the hypocrites. He says that, you know, that they themselves, all their works they do for to be seen of man.

They make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments. Or what else is a phylactery? Will I mention the past? A phylactery was a little leather case in which a small portion of the Hebrew scriptures was written and folded up and inserted into this leather case.

[3 : 38] And then it was bound in a leather strap just between the eyebrows there and tied around the head. And if this was just a little subtle thing, it might not be seen too clearly.

But if it was broad, everyone would see it. Likewise, they would put the things on their wrists in which there'd be, again, a little portion of the word of God tied around their wrists.

And this is because it's said in Deuteronomy that the words and commands of God were to be as frontlets between your eyes. And to be bound upon the wrists of your hands.

So that everything you do and everything you see would be as though it were through the legs. Or through the ministration of God's word. Now, instead of applying that spiritually, how it was meant to be applied, they went and did it physically.

They went and wrote out portions of the law, stuck it between their eyes, bound it on their hands and said, That's us sorted. Now we can do what we like. Now we can think what we like. Now we don't have to worry about our heart being changed.

[4 : 38] And that's what Jesus was criticizing. This idea that if you just sort out the physical thing, then that's the problem dealt with. No, it isn't.

Jesus has used this kind of strength of language elsewhere. As I'm sure many here will be aware. He makes mention of it, first of all, in the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5.

Where he talks about, There he is specifying the right hand, the right eye, because these were the side of greater honour.

The right hand was considered more honourable than the left hand. The right eye more potent than the left eye. He says, It doesn't matter how dear these members or parts of your body may be.

You're better to be without them than that they should lead you into sin. Again, using the physical as the illustration of the spiritual reality.

[5 : 52] Now, in the context of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was talking about lust and adultery in the heart. He was saying, He was saying, Look, people, you pride yourselves on the fact you're not actually guilty of physical adultery.

But you could be looking at every woman that passes with adultery in your heart. I'm sure it just isn't the case the other way around. A woman could look at a man, perhaps, with inappropriate thoughts or whatever.

But it tends to be more powerful and a compulsion on the other way around with men looking at women. And you could be physically pure, but you could be mentally and spiritually contaminated by your adulterous hearts.

You could be mentally and spiritually, but you could be mentally and spiritually and you're better to be without them.

And you go, well, we couldn't possibly deal with that. We couldn't possibly chop off our hands or pluck out our eyes. No, but deal with the spiritual reality within. Deal with the real temptation, the real desire.

[7 : 13] Because the truth of the matter is that all of us have particular besetting sins, whatever they may be. Particular things to which we may be especially vulnerable, but others may not be.

You know, somebody else sitting next to us or in our home or in our workplace or whatever. The same thing, they can take it away. It's not a big deal to them. They can pick it up and put it down. It's not a problem for them. But for us, maybe that particular thing is the be-all and the end-all.

It's the controlling thing. It's the great compulsion. It is the besetting sin. Now, if we are unable to deal with that besetting sin, then we're better off to be without whenever part of us is led down that road.

But if we're honest, there is part of us that loves that besetting sin. If we're honest, there is part of us that loves every sin of which we are guilty.

Otherwise, we wouldn't be tempted to commit it, would we? You know, if the fruit with which Eve and Adam were tempted in the garden, if it was really rotten and black and with worms coming out of it and everything, we would go, No thanks.

[8 : 22] We don't want to eat that. Because it was good and pleasant to the eyes and they could see it would be sweet to the taste. So that's one reason they were tempted. Every sin by which we are tempted, it's always going to have the promise of being better.

There's part of us that loves it. But what do you love more? This is the question. We're afraid to deal with that sin. We're afraid.

What would I be without it? If I could never do that again. If I could never look at that again. If I could never indulge in that again. Oh, how would I live?

And we're afraid. Part of us is afraid to deal with that problem. Because we are afraid of what we will be without it.

This is what Romans is talking about when it says, God has not given you the spirit of fear. If you're afraid to confront that particular issue.

[9 : 24] If you're afraid to confront that particular problem or besetting sin. Then that spirit of fear is not coming from God. It's coming from somebody else. And there's only either God or the devil ultimately when it comes to this kind of power.

This kind of spirit. God has not given us the spirit of fear. But a spirit of power and of love and of a sad mind. He puts the spirit of him into our heart.

Whereby we cry, Abba, Father. He wants us to know that, yes, you're right. You don't have the power to deal with this particular sin. You don't have the power to deal with this particular problem.

But I do. I've got the power. I've got the means. So if you live after the flesh, you'll die. But if after the spirit, you come seeking me. I've got the power to deal with it.

I've got the power to take away that compulsion. To overcome that particular problem. If you really want to ask me and to trust me.

[10 : 24] But if your love for that thing is greater than your love for me. Then ultimately, you don't really love me at all. And I think, oh, that's not fair.

That's not fair at all. Of course I love the Lord. Of course I want him. Of course I want to serve him and so on. That's not fair to say that. Oh, of course I love the Lord. Yeah. But you don't love him enough.

It is as low for those of you who are married. If your wife would say, well, I know you love that other woman. I know that maybe you've had a flame with her. Or whatever. And you're going to choose between her or me.

And it's no use saying, oh, yeah, of course I love you. I love you, my dear. You know that I do. All the years we've had together. Yeah, but you don't want to let her go. It's fair or me. You're going to choose.

Maybe you do love me a bit. But if you love her more, then it's as though you don't really love me at all. And throughout scripture, God is constantly using that particular illustration of matrimonial adultery.

[11 : 22] I'm saying to Israel and I'm saying to his people, look, you've got to put away these other gods. You've got to put away these idols. And you've got to love me and me alone.

No other gods. No other particular easy sins. No particular besettings. It's got to be me. And yes, okay, you might fall from time to time and you come back to me.

And it's going to be me above all else. Because either you love the Lord as the Lord of all. Or he's not the Lord at all. Now, in the context Jesus was using in the Sermon on the Mount, that was adultery.

That was mental adultery, physical, visual adultery, we might call it there. But here it's in a different sense. Here it's in the sense of the fact that if we allow ourselves to be controlled by our sins, then not only are we damaging ourselves, we are also damaging others.

The disciples were all concerned about who's going to be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Who's going to be the best. Now, Jesus has been talking to them before about the Son of Man will be betrayed.

[12 : 31] In the previous chapter, chapter 17 of Matthew, the Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men. They'll kill him and the third he'll rise again. They have an exceeding sorry. And yet, just a little while later, there they are saying, okay, fair enough, there's going to be suffering, there's going to be crucifixion, but, you know, then there's going to be the kingdom.

Who's going to be the greatest in the kingdom? Who's going to be best? And their own ambition is jumping way ahead of all that has to be gone through first. It's as though somebody is able to predict and say, well, if you're going to be a millionaire, you're going to start young, you're going to work hard, it's going to be long hours, it's going to be a real difficult slog, as a lot of times you're going to have to go without, and then, yeah, yeah, yeah, but let's get past that.

Let's get the bit where I'm rich. Now, you don't get to that without all the slog and the hard work and the whatever, if that's what your particular desire was. Jesus and the Lord's desire is that we don't spend our lives chasing the kind of riches that make themselves wings, that we chase the riches that last.

The way your treasure is there, will your heart be also? The danger with having this kind of ambition is that we put ourselves first. Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

And Jesus called our little child unto him and set him in the midst of them and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

[13 : 56] Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and whoso shall receive once this little child in my name receiveth me.

Now, when Mark gives this particular account, Mark's always the one with these little sort of eyewitness details, which are so silly that nobody else has here. And he's got chapter 935.

He sat down and called the twelve unto them. If any man desire to be first, the same shall be the last of all and servant of all. He took a child, set him in the midst of them. And when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, And whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name receiveth me.

And whosoever shall receive me receiveth not me, but him that sent me. These little details. Only in Mark did Jesus took him up in his arms. You can just imagine Jesus' love for little children.

He didn't have any physical children of his own. But he's got all the children, the spiritual children of the world, that are his by the travail of his own soul. He loves children.

[14 : 58] And if we are to be his, we must become as little children. And the problem with putting ourselves first, and thinking, oh, I'm great, I'm strong, I'm powerful, apart from the fact of it being untrue, is that it causes others to stumble.

Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me, but whoso shall offend, that means cause to stumble, cause to falter one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowning in the depths of the sea.

Woe unto the world because of offenses, but it must needs be that offenses will come, but woe to that man by whom the offense come up. You know, like Paul writes to the Corinthians, what he says, you know, there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Yeah, there's going to be offenses, there's going to be heresies. That doesn't excuse those of us who choose for that. It's just like, it's no use saying, well, if I don't do it, somebody else is going to do it. If I don't go down this road, you know, somebody else is just going to do it instead.

That's fine. You leave it with that. As you'll know in the past, I've made a point of saying, oh, yes, Jesus was going to be betrayed. It didn't have to be Judas. Judas could have stopped, then he could have said, no, I'm not going to need to want to do this.

[16 : 13] Somebody else can do this, but I'm not going to make my hands dirty like this. You say, well, what's the use? You know, you've got your 30 pieces of silver already. Somebody else is going to betray him. If you don't, what's the difference going to be?

You might as well get your money and get the good of it. It's not going to change the world. No, but it will change what you do. It will change what I do. We cannot stop offences coming.

We cannot stop perhaps these little ones from being offended or caused to stumble, but we can make sure we don't do it. We can make sure we are not the ones responsible. And the more we cling to our besetting sins, the more we cling to the things that we desire to indulge, even if it makes us look back as a Christian, then the less we show love for those who may, for all we know, be looking to us.

How often do you hear an argument in church circles or whatever saying, oh, okay, yeah, but I mean, I know that's what the Bible says, but you know, so does something differently.

So, you know, it can't be bad if so-and-so does it. And Mr. Such is a cheat, isn't it? He doesn't say anything against it. So, who are we to say that they're not right?

[17 : 28] You know, and immediately we have moved from the authority of the Word of God on the one hand to the practice of sinful men. And when I say sinful men, I don't mean they're worse than anybody. I mean we're all sinners.

But we who are failures, people look to individuals. That's human nature. And they say, what does he do? Why doesn't he do what's in the back?

Maybe it's okay then. If this Christian to whom we look and whom we trust, if he says something different, then maybe it is okay just to forget it. This is causing people to stumble.

Now, far be it from me, to quote again those of wrong religions and so on, but it is attributed to Mahatma Gandhi that he said that all the world would be Christian by now if only the followers of Christ were more like him.

Now, I know that that is a very easy criticism to make. And it won't save anybody at the last day to say, oh, well, I would have been a Christian, but they were all such hypocrites. Well, I was.

[18 : 31] The Christians were all so bad. You know, they weren't living in line with what Jesus thought. So that's why I never became a Christian. Now, a couple of quick questions would answer that.

So how should a Christian be living? What should a Christian do? Well, he should be doing this and this and this and this. And is that what you yourself do? Oh, well, no, it's not.

But then I don't claim to be a Christian. So, you know, what chances? You've got persuading anyone either. Say, oh, yes, yes, that is what I do. So why don't you trust and believe in Christ then? Why don't you become a Christian and show them how it ought to be lived?

Why don't you become a shining example of what a Christian ought to be? Oh, no, no, no, no, because I don't believe in that stuff. That's it. That's why you'll end up lost. I don't believe in that stuff.

It's not actually the hypocrisy and the failure and the sins of others, but it comes an excuse. And it becomes an excuse for so many, and it allows them to wrap themselves in a feel-good factor of how virtuous we are not to go down this road of faith, because look at all the people that have.

[19 : 38] What a bunch of hypocrites they are. And there is no getting away from the fact that our sin causes others to stumble. When Jesus sets his child in their midst, he does so as a living illustration.

A reminder, not merely to Christians, we're all sinners, and we were all lost at one stage before Christ intervened in our lives and found us, but also, likewise, we were all children once.

We were all young ones. Some of us in happy childhood. Some of us perhaps did not. And it wasn't that they might ooh and ah at a little child, like play with him, but rather they might learn by him, learn from him.

And it has to be humility if we're going to learn from a child in the first place. You know, converting grace is to make us not foolish, as children can sometimes be foolish, or spoilt or stubborn, or given to petty cruelties as sometimes children can be, but rather as children, we may desire the sincere milk of the word, not taking upon us the responsibilities and burdens which rightly belong only to our Heavenly Father, the head of our household, and his.

You see, when you're a child, there's lots of things you have to worry about, lots of things go wrong in your little world, but you don't tend to worry about, you know, whether the next mortgage payment is going to be made in time, or whether the car needs to go up the garage, or where the money's going to come from to get the new tyres, or whatever it may be.

[21 : 10] You don't tend to worry about, is there enough money to pay the butcher's bill? You don't worry about these things. That's not part of your little world. You leave that with your parents. You leave that with your father.

And you think, oh well, you know, that's a payable thing. That's a grown-up thing. They deal with that. It's not my worry. Now in many ways, it is right for us as little children to recognise the limitations of our strengths.

We think, oh I've got to control this bit of my life, that bit of my life, I've got to make sure I've got this, I've got to make sure I've got that. Some things you can't control. An amazing number of things you can't control. We can't even control the weather in August.

We've got these kind of storm-like conditions we might expect in November. We can't even control that. We get a power cut and we can't even control our electricity supply.

We can't do half the things we like to think we can do. We are children in the hands. Oh, loving father, there are things we need to leave up to him.

[22 : 10] If you don't know the answer to something, remember your teacher always used to say, if you don't know the answer, put me a hand and ask. We didn't like to ask, in case we were the only one asked, in case we were stupid. But if you ask, and they always used to say, there's probably five other people who want to ask the same question.

If you've got something you don't have and you need it, ask your heavenly father. Ask for his help. Ask for his strength. Because so much of what you can't control is his responsibility to do anyway.

So as little children, there's things we have to leave with our father. We must seek to be harmless, trusting, without a fence, and above all, be humble. As children, who do not, as a rule, seek for ambition and worldly honour, left to themselves, the child of a millionaire will play in the sand quite happily with the child of a beggar.

They don't have great big barriers of who you can and can't mix with. As Matthew Henry puts it, as children are little in body and low in stature, so we too must be little and low in spirit and in our thoughts of ourselves.

This is a temperament which leads to other good dispositions. The age of childhood is the learning age. We're all learning, surely. We all must become as little children.

[23 : 31] We must learn to put even our besetting sins behind us. That if we are tempted and drawn under severe compulsion that is too great for us to do, how will I live if I can't do such and such?

It's like my right hand. It's like my eye that longs to look at these things. You are better off not being able to look at anything than to look at only that which will cause you to sin.

Better off not being able to use your hands for anything than to use them only for sin. Is it such a disaster that your hands, your eyes should be used instead for that which is God-honoring?

That your eyes should look instead upon that which is only, upon that which is pure? As Paul writes to the Philippians finally, my brother, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.

And these are the things which should fill us. It's not the case. Oh, I'm not really alive if I can't do such and such. I'm afraid to confront this problem. God has not given you a spirit of fear.

[24 : 50] God has given you a spirit of can-do. Not in our strength, but in his. He is able to overcome such destructive power with a greater power of this all.

Those who are little in the eyes of the world, these are they to whom we ought to honour the more for Christ's sake. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me.

The less those are or have in themselves to whom we show kindness or honour, the more is in it of goodwill to Christ because there's nothing in them.

There's no benefit to us to be kind or to show special treatment to them. They can't benefit us. That's why Jesus says if you're throwing a party, don't invite your rich friends who will invite you back to theirs.

Bring in the poor, bring in the blind and the maim and the halt and give them a feast because they can't pay you back. And that way you're giving it to the Lord. That way you're honouring the Lord. And the less there is in themselves, the more there is in our goodwill to Christ.

[26 : 03] The less it is for their sakes, the more it is for his and he takes it accordingly. If Christ were physically and personally with us in our midst among us, nothing would be too much trouble for him.

Remember, that's the problem in Matthew 25, the separation of the sheep and the goats. They say, oh Lord, why did we see you in prison and didn't visit you? Why did we see you naked and didn't clothe you or hungry and didn't feed you?

Of course we would have done it for you. And he says, as long as you didn't do it for any of those of my brethren who were in need who didn't do it to me. Whatsoever we do to those humblest, weakest, poorest, most insignificant, even as little children, we do it unto Christ.

Even the little ones that believe have the same privileges with the great ones for they are all obtained like precious faith. And when we talk about little children, it's not just little children in the physical sense.

There are those who are children in the faith, even though they may be of more mature years, even though they may be older than us, they may be little children in terms of the faith. And those whose faith is still at that new childlike vulnerable stage are so easily led, so easily guided, and perhaps so easily led astray.

[27 : 26] All the more reason why we, if we have a few more years, a bit more experience in the gospel, must always take care that all that we do and say and are seen to do and say is in accordance with God's word.

And that if we are at odds with God's word, we better have a very good reason why. How easy it is for us to fall into the way of saying, well, offences are bound to come.

You know, there's only a woe unto the world's offenses. It must need be that offences come. It doesn't make any difference. It doesn't make any difference whether I honour the Lord's day. It doesn't make any difference whether I take this flight or this ferry or whether I play this particular game or whatever.

It's going to happen anyway without me. So I might as well woe unto that man by changing your fence. Come on. You and I will not be called to give account at the last day for what other people did except perhaps other people under our direct care and concern.

But we will be called to give account for what we did and we behaved when we knew right from wrong. You see, that is an offence which causes or occasions guilt through enticement or fear or leading astray seeking to draw souls away from what is good to that which is evil.

[28 : 51] Those who hinder the salvation of others will find their own condemnation the more intolerable. We won't just be judged on the things we've done. We'll be judged on the fruit of it as well.

What we caused others to do. Remember Jeroboam the son of Nebat that first king of breakaway Israel of whom every generation it was said well he wasn't a bad king or he was a terrible king and whatever else he did he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin.

Now what had Jeroboam done? He set up two golden camps one in Dan in the far north of northern Israel one in Bethel near the border with Judah and he told the Israelites to go and worship in the far away one away up in the north and he himself worshipped at the one in Bethel near the border so that the people would be as far away from Jerusalem as it was possible to be not only physically but spiritually.

He said and told them the golden calves were their God the golden calves were a representation of Jehovah in his power and his strength and so these be thy gods O Israel and because now this had become institutionalized into northern Israel kind of culture and psyche and heritage everybody just did it without thinking everybody just followed on blindly but it must be okay our forefathers did it it must be okay the king said it the king wouldn't go against what God said it must be alright because better men than us have done this before us he caused Israel to sin God in his word had said that Jerusalem was his house to be the sacrifices offered by the priests in the temple were the only ones that he would accept under that old testament of this concession Jehovah went against that and he caused everyone who followed him to go the same way so there is an answering that we must make not only for our own sin but for the prince and if that sin is a sin which seems to be so much in our interest it seems to be part of our very person like our hand like our foot like our eye we must be prepared to part with whatever is dear to us when it should prove unavoidably an occasion of sin to us and that is not an easy thing to do but we have to question what is the alternative if we don't can you think of a situation in which somebody might choose to pluck out their eye or chop off their hand or their foot or whatever oh no

I could never give you an instance suppose you're an arctic explorer and you're going to the north pole or the south pole or whatever and you contract frostbite and you can see the gangrene in your black toes and foot and the surgeon says to you look there's nothing we can do for the foot we can chop off that foot and save the leg and the rest of you or you can leave it and the gangrene is going to spread all the way up your leg and your body and you're going to die from it slowly and horribly so it's up to you what do you want to do most of us are going to say okay chop the foot off chop the foot off so we can save the rest it's better to be without the foot so the poison doesn't spread throughout the rest of us and nobody's going to say yeah yeah I want to lose my foot they'd rather keep their foot but they can't they can't keep their foot and stay healthy the gangrene is going to spread unless it is removed now if there be something in our lives something in our behaviour or our practice which yes we are very much attached to but as long as it continues it is going to poison the rest of us poison the rest of our witness of our life of our heart sooner or later we've got to change sooner or later it's got to go home wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee cut them off and cast them from thee it is better for thee to enter into light halt or maim rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire and if thine eye offend thee pluck it out and cast it from thee it is better for thee to enter into light with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire

[33 : 20] Jesus is under no illusions about the reality of hell and about the reality of the fires there but he hasn't come to send people to hell people will end up going to hell if they reject him but rather he has come to save that which was lost verse 11 for the son of man has come to save as he puts it in Luke 19 after the incident with Zacchaeus for the son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost he comes looking for us and he says about Zacchaeus this day is salvation come to this house for that he also is a son of Abraham the Lord loves us all he desires the salvation of sinners he freely offers that salvation but there is a cost the ultimate cost is to himself which he has paid upon the cross but there is a cost to us as well if our old sinful self is at odds with this new call this new light we have to choose the hand or the foot that desires the sin the eye that loves to look at it or if that part of us must die that part of us must die to self and the eyes be turned instead to that which is wholesome and good and pure and the hands and feet be turned to walk the ways only of righteousness out doing that which is good if there was never a devil to tempt us we should still be drawn away of our lusts the inward lust must certainly be put to death must certainly be mortified though it be as dear to us as a hand or a foot you imagine that Moses didn't relish the prospect of just staying in Pharaoh's palace

Egypt was like the wonder of the world all the beauty of the buildings and the paintings and the artwork and the statues which even if you didn't believe in all the gods they represented it was fantastic architecture it was brilliant work yes it was built in the back of slavery but then everything else wasn't those days and the achievement was so brilliant it was it was cool it was sophisticated it was the very pinnacle of civilization who wouldn't want to live amongst it and it was all he'd ever known he'd been brought up with it the prince of Egypt and yet he ended up having to go into the desert to Sinai itself and the burning bush that wasn't consumed he lived out there for years don't you imagine that was like cutting off a hand or a fruit we think of Abraham leaving her of the Chaldees and we think oh yes he went out not knowing where he was going to go what an adventure he was an old man by the time he set out his entire life his family his relatives his business his wealth all that he had built up was all in that city everything was there but what was the problem there they worshipped other gods and as long as he was immersed in that idolatry it was going to take and dilute and damage his relationship with the one true

God oh yeah it would be like cutting off a fruit leaving your own home behind leaving all that you ever knew Abraham had to do it Moses had to do it Jesus had to do it don't you think there would have been part of Jesus if we can say it readily in his humanity that would have loved to have just been an ordinary carpenter just to have made his life from Nazareth marry a nice girl from Nazareth have kids of his own yes he could still be a godly father of the Lord and faithful in the synagogue and doing whatever that he desired to do and he could still be faithful but he couldn't be the atoning lamb of God if he did that he had to carry off more than a hand of foot he had to die himself and that is what we are called upon to do yes it's not a maimed body the Lord desires of us it is only the body of sin that must be maimed it is the body of sin which must be put to death not so that we go on in death but so we enter into life and are able to enjoy life in all its fullness the angels of God are always beholding his face and the angels of these little ones he said do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven they see everything

God sees everything he knows what it is that we are putting before him it will be anything and we must die to serve at the cost of the hand or the fruit or the eye or the old heart whatever it must be it is not worth our lost eternity it is not better to have the delights of an ongoing death than to have the beauty of holiness of Christ who will want to the world because of offenses but it needs must be that offenses come but what of that man by whom the offense come it will not do at the last day to say oh if I hadn't done it somebody else would have done it that's fine let somebody else do it let somebody else answer to the Lord for that sin but not you you stay clean of it you cut off the hand if you have to you pluck out the eye if you have to you turn your eyes to blindness to those things on which it is let astray and turn to the holiness and the beauty and the love which is in the

Lord alone wherefore if thy hand the life would have hand cut them off and cast them from thee it is better for thee to enter into life all the way rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire and by eye bend thee pluck it out and cast it from thee it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hellfire take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones for I say to you that in heaven the angels do always behold the face of my father which is of heaven that's what the angels do that's what we love to do and if we would look upon him we must close our eyes and withdraw our hands and our feet from all which would lead us away from him that is what it means to die to self the old self that is what it means to enter into unison life here and hereafter amen keep ■■■■■ little or whatever and wander into ani

[40 : 25] Awful other queens and that you To out and there