

“THROUGH THE BIBLE”

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LUKE 13-14

Years ago my wife loved to do cross-stitch. She made some beautiful tapestries. But look at the underside, and it was just tangled, knotted thread.

Life is like a cross stitch – right now, all we see is the underside. From our limited, earthbound perspective life is just a twisted maze of circumstances!

Life doesn't always come with an explanation or a set of instructions. There is a good purpose for everything God does, but you learn quickly God doesn't owe us an explanation. In this life, faith doesn't always get a reason. God expects us to *trust Him* even when we can't *trace Him*.

It's only from the upper side that life makes ultimate sense. From heaven's vantage point we see the beautiful tapestry God has woven in our lives.

Luke 13 begins with some folks who'd been perplexed by the underside. They come to Jesus, hoping to make sense of life's tragedy and inequity.

Verse 1, “**There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.**” Pontus Pilate was a poor choice as governor of Judea. He hated Jews and Judaism. He had no sensitivity toward the local customs and religion.

And this infuriated the Jews, especially this incident. Who these Galileans were, and if they committed a crime, we're not told - but Pilate dispatched a Roman guard to kill these Galileans in the Temple, in the act of sacrifice.

There's no doubt this was front-page news. Jesus draws from the headlines to teach a lesson. “**And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?"** Of course, the obvious answer was “no.” These Galileans may not have been considered sinners at all. There's a good possibility they incited Pilate's anger by defying Roman authority. They stood up for Israel's right to self-rule. They were seen as heroes not sinners.

Jesus says, “**I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.**” Here's Jesus' point - they didn't die because they *were worse sinners*. They died because they *were sinners*. In a fallen world all men have sinned and deserve to die. When it comes to heaven and hell grades don't matter. So what if you make a 34 or a 45? On our own we all flunk out of eternal life.

Discreet sinners deserve hell as much as *despicable sinners*. *Crude sinners* and *cultured sinners* go to the same place. We all need to repent. Without Jesus nobody passes. If we don't repent we too will perish.

Jesus pulls another story from the news of His day... “**Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem?"**”

Here's the thought behind the question... [Did God orchestrate the toppling of this tower to punish the 18 victims?](#) *Or did the engineer miscalculate – or did the footings erode – or did the tour guide not read the sign that the tower's capacity was only rated for 15 at a time – or was it just a case of bad timing?*

Here was the popular Jewish assumption – *the tower collapsed as a judgment from God*. All physical events can be traced to a spiritual cause. Every example of sickness, or calamity, or poverty can be tracked back to a specific sin. The common Jewish perspective on life was terribly simplistic: [Bad things happen to bad people and good things happen to good people.](#)

Yet Jesus is saying, *"Wait a minute! It's not that easy."* Jesus answers His own question, *"I tell you, no..."* Did the 18 victims die because they were the *"worse sinners... in Jerusalem?"* Jesus says, *"No!"* There was nothing these men did or didn't do differently than anyone else in Jerusalem that warranted them being in that tower at the time it collapsed. The tragedy was not the result of some specific sin!

But was it the result of sin? Apparently so! For in the very same sentence Jesus tells His listeners, *"unless you repent you will all likewise perish."*

Ultimately, all tragedy, sickness, poverty, and natural disasters are the result of sin. We live in a fallen world! Sin has thrown a wrench in the gears. Our world is no longer the perfect utopia God created. The sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve, subjected the planet to disorder and randomness. Nature has gone haywire. It now acts in an erratic, unpredictable fashion.

The 18 tower victims didn't die because of a specific sin, but sin killed them. Trace all death to its original source, and it's attributable to sin. When a tower falls, or cancer strikes, or a tornado hits - *it's no one's fault and it's everyone's fault.* It's wrong to conclude the victim deserved his plight due to some specific sin, but it's also wrong to assume we're all innocent and somehow God is at fault because He allows conditions our sin creates.

Several years ago a church on Highway 29 was struck by lightning. The *church was charred*. I caught myself self-righteously thinking, *"Wow, I wonder what was going on in that church that God would hit it with a lightning bolt?"*

That's the kind of conclusion Jesus is telling us we shouldn't draw.

What if our church was struck by lightning? Would it mean the pastors were stealing the offering? Of course not! All we can say for sure is that we live in a fallen world. Often we have no clue why God allows certain events to unfold. It's wrong to force a spiritual cause onto everything that happens in life.

I read a quote once by actor, John Travolta. He said, *"The richer I get and the more famous I become, the more ordinary I realize I am, and that my only real talent is 'luck'."* This is tough for Christians to accept. We don't believe in luck. We believe that God's providential hand is behind all circumstances.

Yet even Solomon makes a similar statement in Ecclesiastes 9:11. *"The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all."* We don't like that explanation. It doesn't satisfy our sense of fairness. *Yet sometimes that's the only conclusion we can draw.*

The guys in the tower were just in *the wrong place at the wrong time.*

It goes back to the cross-stitch. From the underside life doesn't always make sense. That's why heaven will be that much sweeter. We'll get the answers to our questions. And we'll see God's wisdom in all that He's done.

Verse 6 "(Jesus) also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'"

In the OT the fig tree was a symbol of Israel. For three years Jesus ministered to the Jews, but they bore no fruit. Now He's on His final march to Jerusalem. This is His 4th and final year - a year of decision. Jesus gives Israel one more year to decide their fate.

"Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up."

Jesus just taught us you can't assume a particular illness is linked to a specific spiritual cause - but neither, assume that it's not. Sickness can be the result of random bacteria or a demon. Here "*a spirit of infirmity*" tortured this woman for 18 years. She lived as a hunchback for nearly two decades.

Verse 12 "But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." Many a crooked person has been "*immediately... made straight*" by the touch of Jesus.

"But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." Here's the voice of religion. It tells God when He can and can't work miracles. Man-made rules matter more than the power of God.

Religion creates tunnel vision – *the Law becomes more important than the Law Giver!* Yes, God told Israel not to work on the Sabbath, but God does whatever He pleases! Religion wants to put God in a box - and God won't fit. Nobody tells God what He can and can't do!

"The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it?" So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound - think of it - for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" The Jewish Law allowed for certain exceptions. If you can loose an animal and lead it to water – *why not free a daughter of Abraham?*

Legalism is the art of stripping rules of their original intent. *Legalism is Law without love.* God gave Israel the Law to teach them how to love God, not deprive them of His love. A loveless law becomes cruel and oppressive.

"And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him." It hit them all that the ruler of the synagogue was opposing the Son of God in the name of God. The stubborn legalist had become blind to the truth.

"Then (Jesus) said, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches."

The sprouting of a mustard seed into a large tree represents an irregular and unnatural growth. There's no such thing as a mustard tree. It's a bush. It's usually pruned, but if left alone, it grows 10 to 12 feet high at best.

God intended for the Kingdom of God to keep a low profile - to remain more *bush-like* than *tree-like*. This is how Jesus lived and ministered. He humbled Himself - made Himself of no reputation. Jesus changed the world through love not force. He used spiritual power not political prowess.

God never wants the church to become top-heavy, bureaucratic, politically ambitious – as it has throughout its sad history. The Church should rely on its spiritual nature, rather than take the shape of other human institutions.

When the Church becomes more *organization* than *organism* – Jesus says "*birds*" or evil men nest in its branches. As long as our agenda is spiritual - our goal is to serve - evil men have no interest. But when the church grows muscle, men with selfish ambition want to join our ranks and jockey for power.

Verse 20, "And again He said, "To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

Again, like leaven the Kingdom of God works from the *inside out*. It functions spiritually, and mysteriously, and under the surface. God never intended for Christianity to become a political force. When that happens it ends up corrupt. The change we effect is on a deeper level.

Verse 22 "And (Jesus) went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able." The word "*narrow*" is the translation of the Greek word, "*stenos*." The term means, "*compressed or constricted*." *Shorthand* or *stenography* is a compressed form of writing.

Apparently, the gate to heaven is like a single turnstile. People have to enter one at a time. No one gets swept up in the crowd and enters heaven. Each person has to make an individual decision to follow Jesus.

Jesus says, "*Strive to enter... the narrow gate*." A commitment has to be struck. A decision has to be made. Nobody floats in on someone else's coattails. You don't become a Christian by hanging out with other Christians.

And to say "Yes" to Jesus is to say "No" to every other so-called Savior. In John 14:6 Jesus told Thomas, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." That narrows down the options. If you're going to follow Jesus you can't be afraid to take sides.

It reminds me of the judge with the deliberating jury. He asked the court clerk to take their lunch order. When the clerk returned, the judge asked if she had any idea how long the deliberations might take. The clerk replied, "A long, long time." The judge asked her, "How can you be so sure?" The clerk said, "Listen to the lunch order... eleven cheeseburgers and one hot dog... eleven coffees and one hot chocolate... eleven fruit pies and one prune danish..." Obviously, there was a nonconformist on board the jury.

And if you want to get to heaven you've also got to be somewhat of a nonconformist. You can't be afraid to stick out. The path to heaven is an upstream swim. As Jesus put it, "*Strive to enter... the narrow gate.*"

Verse 25 "When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'"

Jesus taught in their streets – even entered their homes - but they never opened their hearts to Him. There's a difference between *knowing Jesus and knowing about Jesus*. Make sure you truly know Him or you'll be on the outside of eternity looking in. You don't want to hear, "*Depart from Me...*" You can cry, "*Lord, Lord,*" and never truly make Jesus your Lord!

Verse 28 "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out."

Forever fire, unquenchable thirst, utter darkness - are what we fear most about hell, but these are not the severest tortures. What causes the weeping and gnashing of teeth is when you see your friends and family enjoying heaven... *blessings you'll never experience*.

The permanence of what you've lost is what drives people nuts in hell.

I believe, a one-way glass separates heaven and hell – hell sees into heaven, but heaven only sees its reflection. It can't see the misery of hell.

Verse 29 "They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last."

Eternity will be full of surprise! Folks in *the back of the line on earth* go to *the head of the class in heaven*.

Here's a poem, "I dreamed death came the other night and heaven's gates swung open wide. With a kindly grace an angel ushered me inside. And there to my astonishment stood folks I had known on earth, some I'd judged and labeled, unfit, of little worth. Angry words rose to my lips, but never were set free. For every face showed stunned surprise, no one expected me!"

In heaven, you may have to go to the nosebleed seats to find the famous preachers and celebrity saints. The 50 yard line seats will be occupied by the prayers warriors you never knew existed - folks who served backstage...

"On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You." This was no idle threat... The same Herod had just beheaded John the Baptist. This was frightening news.

"And (Jesus) said to them, "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.'"

Jesus had power over a roaring lion named "Satan," He wasn't afraid of a little fox like Herod. In fact, His greatest demonstration of power was still ahead. The Lord Jesus will rise again on the third day and ascend to heaven.

"Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem." Jesus wasn't worried about Herod. He was

destined for Jerusalem and a Roman cross.

And the thought of the holy city fills His heart with passion. In verses 34-35 Jesus spews out a 1000 years of pent-up grief and divine emotion...

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!"

The Jewish Talmud reads, "Of the ten measures of beauty that came down to the world, Jerusalem took nine." Even the Muslims say, "One prayer in Jerusalem is worth 40,000 elsewhere." Jerusalem is a majestic city. Its beautiful, and blessed, and boiling over with life. Its where east meets west – ancient meets modern – history meets future. All three major religions lay claim to Jerusalem. It's the home of universal hopes and dreams.

Jerusalem is where Abraham offered Isaac. It's the city God gave David to be his capitol. It's the site where Solomon was instructed to build the Temple.

And Jesus recalls not just His earthly visits to Jerusalem, but the thousands of times when He leaned over the rail in heaven, and longed to gather up the Jews to God – just as a mother hen gathers her chicks. But it never happened! *And why?* The ominous answer, "*you were not willing!*"

"See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" In a few days Jesus will make His triumphant entry into the city, and the crowds will sing the Messianic song, Psalm 118:26, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!"

Yet now Jesus isn't rejoicing, He's mourning. Jerusalem was a privileged city, but never lived up to its responsibilities. The city will be destroyed and left desolate. The crowd that hailed Him their Messiah - will scream "**Crucify Him.**"

Chapter 14, "Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely. And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy."

Understand, this is not the same disease the Bulldog wide receivers have contracted in recent weeks. In the modern world it's called "**edema.**" It's usually the result of a kidney shutdown... Tissues fill with fluids and the body becomes bloated. Arms and legs swell. The skin becomes mushy. Dropsy is a painful condition, and in ancient times it was often fatal.

Jesus is invited to the Pharisee's house on the Sabbath, and a sick man just happened to be present. This is suspicious. He was probably a plant. They knew Jesus healed on the Sabbath. They try to trap him red-handed.

Seven times in the Gospels Jesus performed healings on the Sabbath.

Yet the Jews considered healing to be work - a Sabbath no-no. Prior to Jesus, it was all academic. Very few people were healed. But when the Great Physician came on the scene His office stayed open seven days a week. This blessed the sick, but it vexed the proud and narrow-minded legalists.

"And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" Jesus initiates the subject. Attacks it head on.

"But they kept silent. And He took him and healed him, and let him go."

Then He answered them, saying, "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" And they could not answer Him regarding these things." Again the Law made exceptions for livestock. You've heard the phrase, "My ox is in a ditch." Jesus says its heresy to think God cares more for a *pet* than a *person!*

"So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you." And here's the moral of the story... verse 11, "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Proverbs 6:16 tells us, "Six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him..." and at the top of the list is "a proud look".

Yet somehow our society has turned what God calls a sin into a virtue.

Years ago MTV did a documentary titled, "*The Seven Deadly Sins.*" Pride was a topic of discussion. Actress Kristie Alley made the comment, "I don't think pride is a sin... I think some idiot made that up." Rapper Ice-T echoed, "Pride is mandatory. That's one of the problems with the inner city. Kids don't have enough pride." According to Jesus our problem is too much pride.

Humble yourself. Look to Jesus to promote you, if He so desires. Here's a certainty, try to elevate yourself and you'll end up on the wrong team. James 4:6 says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Verse 12 "Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid." The Pharisee who was hosting this party had only invited the kind of people who could throw their own party and reciprocate the invitation. *He gave to get.*

If you *give to get* you're not really giving. I'm afraid a lot of what we call "*fellowship*" is just back scratching. *You scratch my back and I'll scratch your back. Tit-for-tat ain't where it's at!*

"But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

This reminds me of a true story. A Boston couple was planning a very expensive wedding and reception. They'd rented one of the classiest hotels in town. All arrangements were made, when at the last minute the groom backed out. Because of the hotel's reimbursement policy the bride stood to lose the lion's share of her money, so she decided to go through with the reception. She went ahead with the party.

Her first step was to change the menu to "*boneless chicken*" in honor of the X-groom - then she invited the homeless shelters in downtown Boston. For this one night, bag ladies and beggars ate hordeurves and sipped Champaign.

Apparently, this is what heaven is like. Grace rules the roost. People who don't deserve to receive an invitation are *guests of honor*.

"Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.'

In ancient times a party invitation came in two stages. The initial invite was received well in advance, but then on the day of the party the host would alert his guests of the specific arrival time.

"But they all with one accord began to make excuses." Between the first invitation, and *"the day-of alert"* there were distractions – stuff came up.

"The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.'

I read about an elementary school administrator who collected excuses he received from kids who were absent. Here was his favorite, "Dear skool: Pleas exkuse Johnny from being absent October 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33." Signed, "Cincerely, Johnny's dad."

Its said, "The man who is good at coming up with excuses is seldom good at anything else." Here was a man who was alerted to come to the party, but he says he needs to survey a tract of land. It's a pretty lame excuse.

"And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.'" As with the land, he'd already bought them, so what's the hurry? Why do the oxen need a *test drive* all of a sudden?

"Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' He sees his wife seven days a week - he can't slip out of the house for a few hours to follow Jesus? *Here's a guy who's too focused on the family!*

Here're three excuses people pose today for putting off Jesus – *business, possessions, family*. You can make an idol out of all three. Certainly, God wants me to love my wife and kids, but if I grow so introverted I can't sacrifice a little family time for the Kingdom of God I've failed to grasp discipleship. *Focus on the family*, but keep Jesus *the focus of your family*.

"So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.'" Good News sounds sweet to those who get mostly bad news. The rejected and outcast are fertile soil for the Gospel.

Too often churches target the upscale neighborhoods to reach the rich and sophisticated. Whereas Jesus swings His doors open to *the down and out*.

"Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.'"

Notice the operative phrase. Here's God's desire, *"that My house may be filled."*

"For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper."

The excuse makers wanted rain checks, but nowhere in Scripture does God guarantee us a second chance. Never take the callings of God lightly. Never put God on hold.

Isaiah 55:6 reads, "Seek the LORD while he may be found..." – eventually, the day will come when it'll be too late.

Verse 25 "Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, if anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."

Certainly, Jesus isn't advocating a literal hatred for one's family. He's using a literary device known as hyperbole - exaggeration to make a point. Jesus is saying, "If you want to be My disciple your love for me needs to be so strong it makes your love for anyone else look like hate." He tolerates no rival affections. Other relationships are important to us, but our love for Jesus should tower over all other relationships. Jesus should be paramount.

"And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

Crucifixion was used by Rome to express its mastery over the people. It was complete subjugation of the victim's will to the will of another. And this is what it means to "bear the cross." I surrender my life to Jesus. My plans, desires, and motives become secondary to the will of Jesus.

Verse 28 "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it - lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace."

Here's what some people never do - **count the cost!** They attend a church service or crusade, and get caught up in the emotion of the appeal. They say, "Yes! I'll follow Jesus..." without ever really considering what's involved. This isn't the kind of commitment Jesus desires. Following Jesus necessitates serious consideration. Think it through. Count the cost. *And there is a cost.* Someone defined "commitment" as "the willingness to be unhappy for awhile." In the Christian life the death of winter comes before the new life of spring - death comes before resurrection – often you have to endure the night before morning dawns... Following Jesus isn't just happiness and bliss 24/7. You have to decide in advance if you'll stick it out in the tough patches.

When missionary James Calvert sailed to the Fiji Islands to preach the Gospel to the cannibals the ship's captain warned him he could lose his life, and offered to take him back. Calvert answered the Captain, "We died before we left." He had counted the cost beforehand, and had taken up his cross.

"So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."

Thomas Huxley wrote, "It doesn't take much of a man to be a Christian, but it takes all there is of him." Jesus gave all He had, so He could take over all you've got. We've got to be willing to *loose it all to gain it all.* If Jesus is not Lord of all, He's not Lord at all!

"Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out." Salt that loses its saltiness is worthless - as is a Christian who's lost His edge – whose become complacent, and no longer to takes his faith seriously. Jesus closes the chapter, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"