Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

**Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.**

---The Lord gives here a stern warning! --It is better to suffer a miserable death, drowned in the deepest ocean, drug down to the depths with a millstone around your neck suffocating you as salty water fills your lungs, than to cause a little one who believes in Jesus to sin. ---It is better to die than to cause a scandal for one with childlike faith. To cause is a great sin indeed. And Jesus continues.

**If your hand should cause you to sin, cut it off. ---**It is better to lose a hand than to sin. It is better to be crippled and maimed than to be the cause for a little one to doubt Christ. Faith is more important than having two hands.

**---If your foot should cause you to sin, cut it off.** ---It is better to be lame and hobble around than to be the reason a young believer stumbles in their faith. The gift of faith is more important than all fleshly gifts, even walking.

**---If your eye should cause you to sin, tear it out**. ---If having physical sight causes you to look at unholy things it is better not to see. The gift of faith in Christ Jesus is the only thing that keeps us from the eternal blindness and darkness of unbelief.

It was only shortly before this stern warning against scandalizing the little ones, while walking along together, Christ's disciples disputed amongst themselves who was the greatest. They did not realize, it is better to be a little one in the Kingdom of God, than to be the greatest in the whole world. So the Lord warns again against thinking highly of yourself. Pride cometh before the fall. If your hand would make you think you are strong in yourself, cut it off. For you can do nothing apart from the Lord. If your foot would make you walk down the path of pride, cut it off, and instead, consider the little ones, and do not exclude yourself from standing in the midst of that lowly bunch. If your eye should cause you to look down on those of low estate, then gouge it out. For even the one with little faith is able to do great things with the help of the Lord. The world does not esteem the weak, but the Lord does. He is your only hope.

It is his strong hand that helps you. And that is precisely what you need, the help of the Lord--- ,especially in this matter. For who has been perfect and caused no offense? Certainly not me, certainly not you.

The consequence of scandalizing a little one, the consequence of sin, is death, to go to Hell, the unquenchable fire. Those being thrown into hell, will remain forever where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. The judgment on those who cause others to stumble is eternal.

---This is not a trifling matter, nor is there any other way out. It is not as the Jehovah's Witnesses and 7th Day Adventists teach, that damnation is annihilation, that existence simply ceases and there will be nothing. No, Jesus says that in Gehenna, the hellish fire is unquenchable and the worm never dies. The torments never end.

Hell is far worse than having your hand cut off, your foot cut off, your eye gouged out. Hell is being cut off from the good Lord.

As you consider what your hands have done, where your feet have gone, and the way your eyes have looked, be it lust, envy, resentment, or pride, you have no doubt caused offense at one time or another. Whether by word or deed there are many things we say and do which do not glorify Christ. How terrible these sins are! Especially when they are an unholy influence on the faithful youth. No matter how old or young you are, there is always a littler one who is very precious to the Lord, so you ought to tremble in fear, for you would be rightly judged under the full wrath of God.

---This eternal damnation causes those without faith to despair. While unbelievers are filled with that servile fear, fear of a slave who has no father or inheritance, you have been given faith, and no matter how little it may seem, it is enough; therefore you are filled with filial fear, holy fear, right and proper fear of God, Your Father, who is just, who renders to a man according to his deeds.

The Lord who made the sea, who's hand formed the dry land, who has the deep places of the earth in His hand, has considered all the consequences of sin, He has considered the needs of His little ones. He has considered the needs of you. And He took upon Himself to deliver man. Humbled and born of a virgin, Christ, the eternal Word became incarnate. God became flesh to fight the battle for you.

SO praise the Lord, for the Lord is good. The Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants.

Jesus did not fail, but Jesus didn't just lose a hand, or a foot, or an eyeball. Jesus lost his life. He was punished under the full wrath of the Law, scourged and beaten, spit upon, mocked and crucified. Jesus was cut off from the land of the living, He was cut off from the mercy of the Father.

Jesus, who caused no offense to the little ones, was smitten and forsaken. ---The World is scandalized by a God who would suffer and die, but you believe that He is Love and that He loves you. Christ crucified is no offense to you.

Christ suffered the bitter pangs of hell to give you peace, to give you faith. Faith in Him is more important than anything else, more important than anywhere your feet would go, more important than anything your hand would hold, more important than anything your eyes would see.

Now, whenever you come into temptation may you remember Christ who on the Cross was cut off from the love of the Father and conquered sin rising from the dead. Consider the fiery trial He went through; he suffered it for you. His hands and feet were pierced and his eyes bowed down in death as he suffocated on the cursed tree. He sacrificed everything for you, every last breath.

---Learn from His great sacrifice; do not be afraid to suffer loss for the sake of the little ones. It is better to suffer in the face of temptation, it is better to sacrifice, than to lose the reward or cause anyone to stumble in their faith. ---Christ earned deliverance for you and all His little ones through His suffering and temptation. He secured eternal life for you. It is better to enter that life enduring losses in this world than to cause scandal and be eternally damned. Whatever you lose in this life, even if a foot or hand is cut off, even if an eye is torn out, all blessings will be restored to you a hundred fold in the life to come, and the little ones will be thankful that you helped keep them from temptation.

Only the Holy Spirit can keep you from temptation and sin. This is what Jesus means when He says, **Everyone will be salted with fire.** Only fire purifies God's holy ones. ---You will be tested by fire, the Holy Spirit will purify you and teach you in the school of affliction. ---**Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again?** If salt is mixed with impurities and adulterated it is of no good use. So Christ pours out His Spirit to keep you pure and remind you your sins are forgiven. The Spirit helps you mortify the flesh. The presence of the Holy Spirit is what Jesus means when He says, **Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.**

God leads you through all temptations into everlasting life. With Christ's Spirit and gift of faith, your feet learn to come to the aid of the little ones, you learn to use your hands to serve the little ones, and your eyes learn to discern what is right.

As you strive to guard the little ones from scandal, the Holy Spirit will work peace. All that is Christ's will be salted and preserved. Thanks be to God that Christ does not scandalize us and cast us aside. All who put their hope in the Lord will never be put to shame.

Heavenly Father, give us your little ones, lasting faith, humility and perseverance. Grant us the fortitude to make sacrifices to build up the faith of others, always remembering the greatest sacrifice of all that Your Son made for us all. In Jesus’ Name we pray. Amen.

For more study on the Christian life of sacrifice, enduring affliction and avoiding temptation you will greatly benefit from reading, 2 Corinthians 4 and Romans 12.

Now the peace of God which passes all understanding, guard and keep your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen