

## Chapter 30 -- The Salting in Capernaum

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Now from there (the mountain country near Caesarea Philippi, where the Transfiguration occurred), they went out and began to pass through Galilee; but He was unwilling for anyone to know about it.

And while they were conspiring into Galilee, Jesus said to them: "The Son of Man will soon be given up into the hands of men; and they will kill Him; but when He has been killed, then on the third day He will be raised up."

But this word they did not understand; and they feared to ask Him of it--and were deeply grieved.

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Now they came into Capernaum.

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<sup>1</sup> on the word 'conspire': the Greek literally says "turn together", and can be used in several ways, including binding together kindling sticks (such as in Acts 28:3); but also with a connotation of a planned 'bringing together', in this case of people meeting together. Therefore 'conspire'; but in a slightly older sense than the ethically negative modern usage.

Taking the story in context, Jesus has at some time sent messages out to seventy or seventy-two people He can trust, to gather in Capernaum and wait for Him to come. The two most likely times would be during His brief stay in Ephraim before heading north for several weeks along His 'pagan' mission route, or during His brief visits to Magadan/Dalmunatha and Bethsaida-Julias before heading north again into the Trichonitis district near Caesarea Philippi.

And when they had come to Capernaum, those who collected the double-drachma came to Peter and said, "Does your Rabbi not pay the double-drachma?" (i.e. the tax for helping finish and upkeep the Temple, still under construction after forty-eight years.)

He said, "...yes."

Now in the same hour, while the disciples were coming to Jesus (evidently from going around Capernaum after their arrival, to visit families perhaps--and gathering the seventy probably) they began to argue among themselves, saying, "Who then among us is greatest in the kingdom of God?"

But Jesus knew what they were thinking in their hearts.

Now when they came into the house, Jesus spoke to Peter first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom are the kings of the earth collecting customs or poll-tax--from their sons, or from aliens (i.e. strangers passing through their lands)?"

And he declared: "From the aliens!"

And Jesus declared: "Consequently, the sons are surely free! Yet--lest we should cause them to stumble, go and cast a fish hook in the lake (later), and pick the first fish coming up; and when you open its mouth, you will be

finding a stater (equal to a Jewish silver shekel, four drachmas). Get that and give it to them, for Me and for you."

Now He inquired of them: "What did you reason among yourselves on the road?"

But they were silent, for they had argued with one another on the road about who was greatest.

Now being seated, He summons the Twelve and is saying to them, "If anyone wants to be the first, he will be last of all, and servant of all."

And taking a little child, He stands him among them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them:

"Truly I tell you, unless you turn and become like children, you absolutely never shall be entering into the kingdom of the heavens.

"Whoever is receiving one of such children in My name, receives Me, too; and whoever is receiving Me does not receive Me only, but the One who sent Me. For he who is inherently least among you, this is the one who is great.

"Whoever then humbles himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens.

"Look here, then!--you should not be despising one of these little ones; for I am telling you: their angels in

the heavens look continually on the face of My Father Who is in the heavens!

"But whoever is causing one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble... it would be better for him to hang a ton of stone around his neck and be sunk in the open sea!!

"Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! For, it is inevitable that stumbling blocks will come--but woe to the one through whom the stumbling block is coming!

"Now if your hand or foot is causing you to stumble, cut it off!--for it is better to enter life as lame, than to be thrown with both your hands and feet into the flaming garbage dump!<sup>2</sup>

"And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it away!--for it is better for you that part of your body should die and you should enter the kingdom of God with only one eye, than to be cast with two eyes into the flaming garbage dump, where (as it is written in Isaiah the prophet) 'Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched!'

"But how does that seem to you?! If any man comes to have a hundred sheep, and even one of those happens to be

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<sup>2</sup> literally 'into Gehenna'; the Valley of Hinnom being at that time the garbage dump of Jerusalem.

led astray, does he *\_not\_* leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?

"And if it turns out that he finds it, I am telling you truly, that he is rejoicing more over this one than over the ninety-and-nine which *\_haven't\_* gone astray!

"Thus it is not the Will before your Father in the heavens, that even one of these little ones shall be dying!"

"*\_For everyone will be salted with fire!!\_* (that is, per the Follower's account, the fire in Gehenna)

"You are the salt of the earth; and salt is ideal! But if the salt becomes unsalty, how will it be made salty again? With what will you be seasoning it!? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men! Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear:

"Have salt in yourselves; and be at peace with one another."

Now John answered and said, "Rabbi... we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to hinder him, because he does not follow along with us."

But Jesus said to him: "Do not hinder him; for no one shall do a miracle in My name, and then be able soon after to speak an evil of Me.

"For he who is not against you, is for you! You take heed to yourselves!

"Now, if your brother is sinning, rebuke him; but if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns seven times to you saying, 'I repent!'--you must forgive!

"And if your brother sins, go and reprove him, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother.

"But if he does not listen, take one or two more with you (to hear or see what he is doing), so that (as it is written in the Law) 'By the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be confirmed'.

"Yet if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the group.

"And if he refuses to listen even to the group, let him be to you as the pagan and the tax-collector.

"I tell you truly: whatever you bind together on earth shall be what has been bound together in the heavens; and whatever you free on the earth, shall be those who are freed in heaven.

"Again, I tell you truly: if ever two of you should be agreeing on the earth concerning any matter, whatever they

shall be requesting shall be coming to them from My Father  
in the heavens!

"For, where two or three are gathered, in My name--  
there I am, in their midst."

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Afterward (having gone to get the fish, perhaps),  
Peter came to Him and said, "Master... how often must I  
forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven  
times??"

Jesus said to him: "I am not telling you 'up to seven  
times'; but till seventy times and seven!

"So. For this reason, the kingdom of the heavens may  
be likened to a certain man, a king, who wished to settle  
up accounts with all his slaves.

"Now as he starts the settling, one debtor is brought  
to him who owes ten thousand talantons of silver! (a  
'talanton' being the heaviest weight of measurement.)

"But as he did not have the means to pay, the master  
orders that he shall be sold, including wife and children  
and whatever else he has, in order to make payment.

"The slave did fall down prostrate to him, saying,  
'Sir!--be patient with me; and I will pay you everything!'

"And the master of that slave did have compassion, and dismisses him, and pardoned all his loan.

"But...

"...that slave went out and found a fellow slave, who owed to him one hundred daywages ('denarii'). And holding him, he choked him, saying, 'Pay, if you are owing anything!'

"His fellow slave did fall down prostrate to him, saying, 'Please be patient with me; and I will pay you everything!'

"Yet he wouldn't.

"And instead, he goes away and has him cast in jail, until he might be paying what he owes.

"So his fellow slaves, perceiving what is happening, are deeply grieved; and coming to their lord, they make clear what is happening.

"Then his master, calling him to him, is saying to him:

"'You... wicked... slave!!'

"'I forgave you all that debt, because you pleaded me! Was it not required of you, to also have this mercy on your fellow slave, as I am merciful to you!?!?'



"And in his fury, his lord is giving him over to the torturers, until he should repay all that was owed to him.

"So. This is how My Father in the heavens also shall be to you; if you, each one of you, do not forgive your brother, from your heart."