**“Whoever”**

# Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29

James 5:13-20

Mark 9:38-50

Pentecost 18, Sept. 25/26, 2021

The **conclusion** to the book of James: “My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and **someone** brings him back, let him know that **whoever** brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Text**

James would have us **be “someone”** **who** **returns one (even if it’s just ourselves)** **from “wandering from the truth”**. **Accountability to God and truth through, even, each other** is the **“joy” of the responsibility of being part of Christendom**. It’s what believers who work in their belief **DO**. And I say “**working in their belief**” because **James’ goal** is that **all believers be ACTIVE in faith (DOING the called-upon things)** … **BEING ACTIVE as believers must be**.

It’s for that James **begins his book** the same way that he **concludes it**. In other words, James say what he was planning to say; then he says it … then he tell us what he just said. Our text was his **concluding words** (the **last** of that last / 5th chapter). He **begins the end of his 1st chapter this way**: “Know this, my beloved brothers: **let every person** be quick to hear, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. **So (or therefore)** put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and **receive with meekness** the **implanted word, which is able to save your souls**. **There’s** the **first ACTION ITEM**.

“**BE DOERS of the word** and **not hearers only, deceiving yourselves**. For if **anyone** is a **hearer of the word and not a doer**, here is what he is like. He is **like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. But he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like**. But the **one whoever looks into the perfect law (the Word of liberty and Good News as in Gospel) and** **perseveres (staying with it), being no hearer who forgets but a DOER WHO ACTS, he will be BLESSED IN HIS DOING, whoever he is DOING THAT**” “**Being** **ACTIVE in faith / DOING it ACTIVELY has to be a Christian’s “joy” in responsibility**. It’s **what believing looks like (ACCOUNTABLE and ACTIVELY CARING AND HOLDING ACCOUNTABLE)**. It’s the **Law**, yet **Law that we love to SUBMIT TO, so DO**.

**Bridge**

And the **PERSON ACTIVE** in this the text calls “**whoever**”. Other pronouns (“**Someone**” or “**who**”) place-set for “**whoever**” a bit, but they’re all the “**whoever**” who are James’ concern for writing, this his solitary offering to Scripture). **“Whoever”**, James points out, **is actually anyone** showing how **personally subjective belief is when** **activated**. It just happens because it’s what faith **DOES**, and **DOES UN-NOTICED BY THE DOERS**. And begs the question: “are **YOU, inDEED,** “**whoever**” **participating in the Gospel (and** **ADVANCING IT**) **the way believers ought always automatically (but with concerted effort) DO**. What’s **your** **role** in the duty-bound re-born and renewed life? What do, **inDEED**, **you** **DO** noticeable to God and simply because God’s brought you to His kingdom and made you to be counted among His own?

**This ACTIVENESS and ACCOUNTABILITY believING** is where the expression comes from: “**worth your salt**”. The soldiers of Rome got paid in salt which was (at the time) “worth its weight in gold”. Salt was that valuable then. Salaries (from the Latin word for salt / “salarium” was named for it … you had to be worth your salary (or salt). And we join in membership in the Church of God committing (as we should) to submit to  **ACCOUNTABLITY** a**nd a MUTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT (or care of each other), holding each other accountable in care for them**. Jesus says: “Have **salt** in yourselves and **be at peace with one another**” **(dealing with one another toward peace)**. “Everyone will be salted with fire” (in the trials and tests of this world that we’ll have to face, but as **ACTIVE / SALTY BELIEVING CHRISTIANS**). And “**salt is good**, but if the salt has lost its **SALTINESS**, how will you make it **salty again**?” “**SALTY / WORTH THE SALT**” is the key expression and characteristic there.

**Text**

The Old Testament and Gospel accounts **demonstrate that “saltiness”** in this way: while the “rabble that was among the children of Israel” rages, it was **called out for the “anger” that it caused the Lord God**. This wasn’t, here, an account where God was concerned with anybody who wasn’t His own, but with the ones (“any one / whoever”) who were supposed to be, committed (from the foot of Mount Sinai) to an **ACTIVE** submission to Him, not supposed to be expressing “rabble” attitudes, “weeping through their clans from their doors”, complaining about the challenges that God had allowed them to have to go through.

But they were **ACCOUNTABLE TO HIM** and **took the chastisement and correction that they were due**. God **gathered (in normal fashion)** “elders” who’d help prophesy and correct all sinful complaints in the ranks, and they (the people of God) committed to submitting themselves to that. God **included** “seventy” into the normal order that was, mostly, just Moses, butt **also let** **ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE** two **additionals (“ones”** named Eldad and Medad”) to also **DO GOD’S WILL IN THIS**. So, along with the formal seventy called to be “salty worth their weight”, **THESE** (“**whoever**” Scripture calls them) **added “saltiness” also to the mix, and God was happy with that**. “**Saltiness**” was what mattered to God.

Jesus showed Himself appreciating the same thing in the “**someone**” outside of His twelve who was, **also**, “casting out demons in His name”. “Don’t stop him”, Jesus said, “for no one who **DOES a mighty work in my name** will be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. For **the one**” (any ‘one’ / ‘**someone**’) who is not against us is for us. For truly I say to you, ‘**whoever**’ gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Me will by no means lose his reward.” The “**saltiness**” **of the work**, again, was the concern of the Lord God, Jesus, not the **formality of the “officialness” of the** **who was doing it**. Jesus would **make the “whoever”-part** **work out if it was ever meant to**. **Disciples**, certainly, were considered “**worth their salt**”. But **so was (in the work also “in Jesus’ name”)** was the **extra guy in that context and Means**.

Jesus does worry, though, about **others who should be committed** not being “not worth our salt”. “Whoever causes”, He said, “one of the 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**”, and in that I fear most the “unsaltiness” of supposedly Christian parents who pull their children of a young age away from baptismal fonts (not bringing them there) or some’s skipping Sunday School training of their kids and Divine Service’s feeding by God. “If your hand causes you to sin”, He said, “cut it off”. “It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if you’re eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where their work does not die and the fire is not quenched. For **everyone” (who should be someone “salty”) “will be salted with fire”** (or tested by their **ACTIONS OR INACTIONS OF CHALLENGES, EVEN THE DAILY BASIC ONES**). “Salt is Good, but if the salt has lost its **SALTINESS**, how will you make it **SALTY** again? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another” (dealing **ACCOUNTABLY AND WITH CARE for ourselves and each other**)

## Application

The entirety of James (front to back) is about a **retained and steadfast, fed, and expressed “SALTINESS”**. From “endurance” and “faithfulness” that’s planted and grown strong by a consistent exposure to God’s Words, to humility and service, **CONDUCT** befitting one who’s (whoever is) repentant and ready to forgive anywhere, that’s the biggest sign.

We’re to be the “**whoever**” **who is, inDEED, ACCOUNTABLE ACTIVELY TO GOD AND OF HELP TO OTHERS / EACH OTHER BY BOND AND RESPONSIBILITY**. **God’s Son** was (became incarnate from Heaven the “**WHOEVER” WHO WAS SALTIEST OF ANY, WORTH EVEN HEAVEN’S WEIGHT IN SALT**. **Jesus was the One (the “Whoever”) who did, inDEED “brING back sinners from wandering, saving souls from death, and, yes, covering a multitude of sins” (all of ours)**. **HE** **SAVED AND KEEPS SAVING US**, and **allows us to commit to, then, a participation also in the “saltiness” of Himself**. In His name, +Jesus’, Amen.