**The Dead Sea Disciple**

**Introduction**

1. About 60 miles south of the sea of Galilee in the deepest part of the Jordan Valley is an oblong lake occupying about 300 square miles.
   1. With its surface at 1,312 feet below sea level it is the lowest point on earth.
   2. Its greatest depth is 1,308 feet.
   3. The Bible calls this body of water the Salt Sea, the Sea of Arabah, the Sea of the Plain, and the Eastern Sea.
2. In the 2nd century A.D., Greek and Latin writers gave the body of water its name by which it is commonly known today – The Dead Sea.
   1. Reason for name – Only a few of the lowest orders of animal life are found in it. Its shores are scattered with dead fish brought in by the Jordan river which soon perish after their entry.
   2. Reason for deadliness:
      1. Salt Sea – abnormally large salt content.
      2. Yields 26 lbs. of salt to 100 lbs. of water. (Compared to the Atlantic’s 6 lbs. of salt to 100 lbs. of water.) (The sea is about 25% solids.)
      3. Enough solid matter to make the densest of objects easily float.
      4. Its high concentration of mineral matter makes it impossible for most life to be sustained. (Even marine life of the salt-water variety.)
   3. Reason for high mineral concentration:
      1. Only 4 inches of rain per year, but much water intake from other bodies.
         1. On the southwestern shore is a 7-mile-long mountain of rock-salt which the rain washes into the Dead Sea.
      2. The sea is fed by the Arnon, Udhemi, Zerqa, Zered, and Jordan Rivers – the Jordan being the greatest contributor at about 6 to 7 million tons of water daily.
      3. However, nothing flows out of the Dead Sea – NO OUTLETS!
         1. Maintains equilibrium by evaporation with its hot and arid climate – often rising to 124 degrees Fahrenheit.
         2. Since nothing is flowing out the minerals brought in remain when evaporation takes place.
3. The Dead Sea takes, but it never gives. The result is a deadly atmosphere for any living organisms.
4. We must not be guilty of the description, “Dead Sea Disciple.” We become guilty of this when we receive and receive from the Lord and others without ever passing it along, giving to others.
   1. While we may be inclined to think we have spiritual health because of all we have taken in, we actually do not.
   2. Spiritual health requires receiving nutrients from the Lord, but those are given that we might exert such spiritual energy in our service to God and others – if we aren’t doing anything with what we’re given, we are actually dying spiritually.
5. God Gives That We May Give
6. God’s Design and Desire
   1. God’s design for disciples is to take what He gives them for spiritual sustenance and let it flow forth from them in usage.
   2. **John 7:37-38** – a promise for quenched thirst.
      1. **(v. 38)** – Where one comes to Jesus PARCHED and DRY, they leave QUENCHED and OVERFLOWING.
      2. His expectation is that the disciple blesses others with this source of spiritual life – which is ultimately HIM.
      3. EXAMPLE – **John 4:13-15, 28-29** – Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well.
   3. CONTEXT – **John 7:39** – spoke concerning the HS.
      1. Prophesy concerning outpouring of Spirit with start of the kingdom – **Acts 2:17-21**
      2. Given to the apostles, then Spiritual Gifts imparted to believers to establish them – **cf. Romans 1:11**
      3. Use of gifts given by Spirit for the benefit of others – **1 Corinthians 12:4-7**
   4. Disciples receive the Spirit of God through the word of God, and such should flow from them to others – **2 Timothy 3:16-17** – scripture given to equip for every good work.
7. The Consequence of Only Being a Receiver
   1. When one takes what the Lord gives them but does not use it in service to God and others, i.e. does not become a giver, that one is cut off.
   2. Jesus as the vine **– John 15:1-2, 4** – by abiding in Him we receive nutrients, but this is so that we ourselves can bear fruit.
      1. A branch that does not yield fruit is a branch that RECEIVES but does not GIVE.
      2. GOD CUTS SUCH BRANCHES OFF, AND THROWS THEM IN THE FIRE – **John 15:6**
   3. Example of the perversion of receiving without giving – **Matthew 18:21-35** – Parable of the Unforgiving Servant.
      1. King forgives servant debt after he begs for patience and forgiveness.
      2. That servant had his own servant who owed, and similarly that servant begged forgiveness, but forgiveness was not shown.
      3. News reaches the king – **Matthew 18:32-35** – anger and punishment – the man received but wouldn’t give.
      4. **(v. 35)** – the lord will react the same if we take, but do not give in return. (He has given us forgiveness, and expects us to grace others with forgiveness as well.)
8. Don’t Be A Dead Sea Disciple
9. Are We Being a Good Steward?
   1. A disciple is a steward:
      1. Act as stewards of God’s given grace – **1 Peter 4:10**
         1. Gift? Any gift! – Everything good comes from God, whether spiritual or physical.
         2. He has ENTRUSTED it to us as STEWARDS – meaning it is put in our possession to use for His benefit – really belongs to Him (**cf. 1 Corinthians 10:26** – earth and everything in it is God’s).
      2. Most mature Christian is above reproach as a steward of God – **Titus 1:7** – qualification of an elder.
      3. Paul’s attitude as an apostle – **1 Corinthians 4:1-5** – He was a steward of God’s word, which really belonged to God, and was going to be faithful in administering it to others.
         1. Being transformed by the word himself – **2 Corinthians 3:18**
         2. Entrusted with such to give it to others – **2 Corinthians 4:6**
      4. Are we being good stewards of what God has given to us? OR ARE WE LIKE THE DEAD SEA, TAKING IN WITHOUT HAVING ANY OUTLETS TO GIVE TO OTHERS, AND BACK TO GOD?
         1. Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive – **Acts 20:35**
   2. With Truth
      1. Speaking of the unity of the body – **1 Corinthians 12:13** – all made to drink into one Spirit.
         1. Takes back to first text – **John 7:37-39** – Spirit via revelation of God’s word.
         2. Drink into by obeying commands in faith. (Especially being baptized in the text.)
         3. Context – Spiritual gifts for the edification of all – **cf. 1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:12**
      2. We are edified so we can edify in return – **Ephesians 4:11-12, 15-16** – built up so that we can contribute to the edifying of the body.
         1. Are we participating in worship?
         2. Do we ready ourselves for Bible class so we can contribute?
         3. Are older Christians teaching younger Christians?
      3. Evangelism as well – **Matthew 28:18-20** – disciples are to make disciples, and teach the word. **(cf. Acts 8:4** – scattered in persecution and preached.)
   3. With Love
      1. Love is a debt we owe:
         1. To God – **2 Corinthians 5:14-15** – are we merely taking love from God without reciprocating? (**cf. John 14:15** – by keeping commandments)
         2. To others – **Romans 13:8** – do we realize our debt to each other? (**cf. 1 John 4:10-11** – God loved us and we ought to love each other.)
            1. Extending comfort – **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**
            2. Helping when we can – **1 John 3:16-18**
      2. We cannot merely receive love. It is given to be passed along.
   4. With Money
      1. We must not yield to the temptation of Satan to be stingy with our money.
      2. God has blessed us with our money so that we have sufficiency to give: (We’re merely stewards of it.)
         1. **2 Corinthians 9:8-11** – essentially saying that God gives to us so that we can give to others.
         2. It is not right for us to be stingy in our giving. That came from God in the first place.
         3. God only loves the liberal/cheerful giver – **2 Corinthians 9:6-7**
         4. NOT ABOUT AMOUNT, BUT PROPORTION AND HEART – **2 Corinthians 8:1-2** – Macedonians were liberal gives even in poverty.
      3. Contribution – **1 Corinthians 16:2** – as you have been prospered.
         1. Not a percentage, but each time prospered by God, and in proportion to that which we have prospered.
         2. Purpose in heart – **2 Corinthians 9:5, 7** – not an afterthought, but first priority with our money.
      4. Benevolence to needy saints when given opportunity – **Acts 20:35; Romans 15:25-26** (Contribution from Macedonia and Achaia used to help needy saints.)
      5. Do you have a job from which you prosper? Are you giving to the Lord? Are you giving to others? If not, you are a Dead Sea Disciple.
10. Are We Sharing Jesus? – Ultimately, as disciples of Jesus who have received Him, we need to be sharing Him with others in the world we live in.
    1. God gave Jesus – **John 3:16**
    2. We received Jesus – **John 7:37-38** – received Him by obedient faith, and are expected to be a source of flowing water as a result.
    3. We share the Messiah – **John 1:41** – Andrew to his brother Simon Peter.
    4. We share Jesus by allowing Him to live in us – **Galatians 2:20**

**Conclusion**

1. We must come to God to receive that which we can only find in Him.
2. However, while He gives, we are to give our love and faithfulness in return.
3. Also, we are to understand that He gives to us as to stewards – we must in turn bless others with the same, showing them a way to eternal life.
4. We must not be like the Dead Sea – always receiving with no outlets to live – such is a place of death.