**The Dead Sea Disciple**

**Introduction**

1. At the end of the Jordan Valley on the southeastern border of Canaan is an inland lake about 50 miles long and 10 miles wide fed by the Jordan river.
	1. With its surface at about 1,290 feet below sea level it is the lowest point on earth’s surface, with its greatest depth at more than 1,300 feet.
	2. The Bible calls this body of water the Salt Sea, the Sea of Arabah (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. The salt content causes a condition in which no form of marine life can live, though some fish wash ashore having come in from the Jordan river.:
		1. With an approximate 25-30% salinity, it is the most saline natural body of water of any size in the world. (4x that of ocean water)
		2. Enough solid matter to make the densest objects easily float.
	2. Reason for high mineral concentration:
		1. The rainfall seldom exceeds 2 inches per year.
		2. The sea is mainly fed by the Jordan River, emptying an average of 6 million tons of water into the sea every day; other smaller rivers also empty into the sea.
		3. However, nothing flows out of the Dead Sea – NO OUTLETS!
			1. Despite this, the surface does not rise more than 10-15 feet due to the hot, arid climate, along with its surface being well below sea level, causing rapid evaporation of the water.
			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 are 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 to others.
	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. Prophecy 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 (a miniscule debt compared to what was forgiven of him), 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 4:7 – what do you have that you did not receive from God?**).
		2. Mature Christians are above reproach as stewards of God – **EX: *“For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward”* (Titus 1:7, NASB)**
		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.)
			1. Do we give what we have? – **Acts 3:6 (While he healed him, the ultimate gift was Jesus though the word he then preached, and that the miracle confirmed.)**
	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.
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.