Because of his strong desire to live, Ralston was somehow able to tie a tourniquet to his right arm, and then painstakingly do the unthinkable – crudely sever the crushed limb just below the elbow with his own knife. Once the grim task was done, he found a way to set up his climbing ropes and hooks, then rappelled 60 feet straight down a rock wall to the canyon floor, where he began the arduous trek back out to his vehicle.

That's where rescuers found him late Thursday afternoon, bloody and dehydrated, staggering along a stream. What was left of his right arm was still wrapped in the tourniquet, and he was only two miles from his car; he had walked seven miles with his wound. His was quickly airlifted out of the canyon by the rescue helicopter to St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction, where the veteran climber is still listed in serious condition.

Authorities and medical experts say that if Ralston had not cut off his arm to free himself, he would have surely died from either dehydration, exposure, or the effects of his limb being crushed. But were such drastic measures really necessary? Yes, we know he would have eventually died from his injuries, but what if he had just postponed his tough decision? Wouldn't someone have found him if he had just waited?

Utah rescue helicopter pilot, Terry Mercer, says if Ralston had not made the decision to cut off his own arm, he would never have survived. He told ABC news, "Where [Aron] was pinned, we went back in there and looked at the spot he was pinned and it was such a narrow canyon and the overlap was so bad that we could fly right directly over the top of it we would have never seen him down there." "He reached a point when he knew he could die with an arm, or live [without one]," said Mike Hill, a spokesman for Canyonlands National Park, "To have the mental fortitude to do [what he did] is incredible. Aron Ralston, like few others, could quite literally explain what Jesus meant when He made this graphic, gruesome statement:

Matthew 5:30 (KJV)  And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Matthew 5:30 (NLT) And if your hand—even if it is your stronger hand—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

No, Jesus wasn't talking about mountain climbing accidents; he wasn't even referring literally to the physical body. He was, however, speaking of a life-threatening injury that every person here has experienced – the wound of sin which traps us, alone in our personal wilderness. And without taking drastic measures, sin – in any form – will be fatal to you!
Sin Seduces Us

- Sin promises satisfaction and fulfillment
- But outward looks can be very deceiving – it’s a trap!
- **Proverbs 5:3-6** The lips of an immoral woman are as sweet as honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil. But the result is as bitter as poison, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. For she does not care about the path to life. She stagers down a crooked trail and doesn't even realize where it leads.

But Sin Doesn’t Satisfy Us

- Sin can bring real pleasure – it can feel great to sin; that’s why sin is so powerful and addictive
- There are godless comedians who are hysterical to hear, drugs that can make you feel like you own the world, and plenty of people who enjoy their immoral lifestyle of partying
- **BUT THERE IS NO LASTING SATISFACTION IN SIN!** We are left with an empty, unclean, ungratified, hollow, discontent feeling.
- That’s why when sinners REALLY meet Jesus, they gladly abandon their sinful habits in a moment.
- **Hebrews 11:25** Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Sin Robs Us

- **SIN STEALS OUR JOY!**
- Don’t underestimate the importance of joy!
- **Nehemiah 8:10** For the joy of the LORD is your strength.
- **Psalm 16:11** In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.
- **Proverbs 17:22** A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person’s strength.
- **Proverbs 18:14** The human spirit can endure a sick body, but who can bear it if the spirit is crushed?
- **SIN STEALS OUR CONFIDENCE BEFORE GOD!**
- Sin steals all purity and innocence, making us uneasy with people and uncomfortable with God.
- The devil doesn’t flee from someone who is participating in sin – no matter how loud they pray! But the good news is that we CAN live in such a way that we have confidence before God.
- I’d rather be confident than cowering, living clean than standing condemned, choosing purity instead of pollution!
- **John 10:10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Then Sin Enslaves Us

- **Proverbs 5:22** The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast.
- When you sin, you tie yourself up; instead of the sinner being free and the believer being “in bondage” it’s really the reverse!
- BUT SIN WON’T LET YOU IN ON THIS SECRET!
- Satan loves to mock the human race. He loves to see men and women, the pinnacle of God’s creation, putting needles in their arms, committing sodomy, shooting and stabbing each other, begging for money for another drink, dressing as transvestites, dying of sexually transmitted diseases, tossing and turning in their guilt, wallowing in their shame, drowning in their embarrassment. The devil loves to degrade and humiliate us!
- Every time you sin, it becomes harder for you to resist and easier to yield. THE TIME TO SAY “NO” IS NOW!
- **James 1:14-15** But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Finally Sin Destroys Us

- **Proverbs 6:27-28** Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?
- If you play with fire, you WILL be burned.
- If you play with sin, you WILL be destroyed.
- It’s NEVER worth it in the end!
- **Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- There is only one way in which sin is faithful – its reward is always death. Unfortunately, sin never shares this secret with you!
- Instead, sin promises riches, fame, pleasure, fulfillment and power. And while you may experience some of these along the way, they are only fleeting, lasting at best just a few decades.
- And then the real payday comes, and the results are always the same – DEATH, both natural and spiritual.
• ACTUALLY, SIN BRINGS DEATH RIGHT FROM THE START – It always kills something in us when we transgress. It assaults our sensitivity, trashes our conscience, mauls our willpower, and defiles our soul. You could almost say that every time we sin, something in us dies. Then, at the end of the road, sin pays up with eternal death.

• **Galatians 6:7** Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

• IT TAKES DRASTIC MEASURES TO GET RID OF SIN! You can’t wean yourself away gradually, you can’t wait for a better opportunity, you can’t play around with it … YOU HAVE TO AMPUTATE! NOW!

• **Matthew 5:30 (KJV)** And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

• You have to do something even more courageous than Aron Ralston; you have to DIE to your old nature. But there’s a wonderful rescue waiting for every person who makes that tough decision!

• **2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.