

# The Gospel According To Mark

## Part Fifteen

**Mark 9:49-50** [New King James] *“For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavour, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.”*

According to sacrificial laws given by God to Moses, every sacrifice must be salted with salt before it was offered on the altar, [**Leviticus 2:13**].

That sacrificial salt was called the salt of the Covenant [**Number 18:9; 2 Chronicles 13:5**].

It was the addition of that salt which made the sacrifice acceptable to God and which His covenant law laid down as necessary.

The Greek word translated “salted” is “*halizō*” meaning refined.

**Malachi 3:2-4** [New King James] *“But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like launderers’ soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the LORD, as in the days of old, as in former years.”*

This refining process is linked with both the work of John the Baptist [**verse 1**] and Jesus Christ’s Second Coming as judge of all human beings [**verses 5-6**].

**1 Peter 1:7** [New King James] *“that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,”*

Referring directly to the trial of fire and salt to refine our lives so that they are acceptable to our Creator God at His Second Coming, [**1 Peter 4:12**].

**1 Corinthians 3:8-9** [New King James] *“Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building.”*

**We are working with the Holy Spirit Who is God, to build a new person who reflects the very character of Jesus Christ.**

**1 Corinthians 3:10-14** [New King James] *“According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.”*

Jesus Christ is the foundation on which we are to build this Christ-like character.

The quality of our spiritual life will be determined by what materials we are using to build this new character.

**How seriously do we take the quality of our prayers and our study and meditation on God's Word, the Christian Bible?**

**How is our life influencing the lives of others around us, acting like salt adds flavour to all things?**

Is our example helping to preserve the lives of others as salt does to food, by our stand against the rottenness and corruption of society?

Such a life is the result of being refined by trials and is likened to gold and silver that is the result of ore being purified by fire, or gems that are the result of intense heat and pressure deep in the surface of the earth.

**If our spiritual life is taken lightly, then all that will be produced is wood, hay and straw that is easily destroyed by fire and returned to its origin before life was given to it, carbon or dirt!**

The major problem with the Church in Corinth was that it was only producing wood, hay and straw because of a lack of discipline in their spiritual lives.

If we are shown that our lives lack "salt" as Paul was showing the Church in Corinth, we need to repent as they did, [2 Corinthians 7:8-11].

**Mark 10:1-12** [New King James] *"Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again. The Pharisees came and asked Him, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?' testing Him. And He answered and said to them, 'What did Moses command you?' They said, 'Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her.' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation, God "made them male and female." "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.' In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter. So He said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.'"*

Jesus Christ had now left Galilee and had entered into Judea, He had not yet entered Jerusalem but He was approaching the final act of total sacrifice.

Once again the Pharisees questioned Jesus Christ with the hope of discrediting Him with the crowds.

**Matthew 5:31-32** shows that Jesus Christ had spoken about marriage and re-marriage and it may be that these Pharisees hoped that He may contradict Himself answering the question. Also they wished to involve Jesus Christ in enmity with Herod who had in fact divorced his wife and married another.

The judgement given by John the Baptist on this act of Herod's that was contradicting the law cost John his life.

The real crux of the problem of divorce was the interpretation of the law as it is in **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**.

As Jesus Christ did often, He answered a question with a question so that the person bringing the question could clarify what they were asking in their own mind.

Jesus Christ then explained why Moses was inspired by God to write this precept they had quoted.

**This may have been because this was the best that could be expected of a person who had not yet had access to the influence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.**

Jesus Christ then reminded them this was **not** what God intended at the time of the creation of men and women, [**Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:24**].

Jesus Christ made it very clear that marriage was more than a physical union, this is revealed when we look to the future of Jesus Christ and the Christian Church, [**Revelation 19:6-9**] which is likened to an intimate marriage relationship.

Also eternal life as defined in **John 17:3** was to be a relationship so intimate with God that the Greek word translated “*know*” is the same word used to define the intimate relationship between a man and a woman in marriage that was the means of producing children, and is used in **Luke 1:34** by the Virgin Mary.

**To Jesus Christ, human marriage was a physical training ground for His future marriage with true Christians at His Second Coming.**

Marriage to Jesus Christ was not a union that could be broken by human laws and regulations.

Marriage to Jesus Christ was absolute and permanent union in which His future bride should prepare herself physically for a future union after His and her physical death and resurrection.

Those who seek marriage only for physical pleasure must be reminded that marriage is also a responsibility now and in their eternal future, a spiritual union now and into the future.

**Mark 10:13-16** [New King James] *“Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.’ And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.”*

Jesus Christ was often criticised for spending too much time with the wrong people, children, tax collectors and sinners, [**Matthew 9:11; Luke 15:1-2; Luke 19:7**].

Jesus Christ wanted to speak to those who needed Him most, [**Matthew 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32**].

**How do children express the attitude of all who will be in the Kingdom of God, God’s created family of children.**

**A child’s humility** – there are children who are exhibitionists, but this is always the end product of misguided adult treatment.

**Ordinarily a child is embarrassed by prominence and publicity. They have not yet learned to think in terms of place, pride and prestige.**

**A child’s obedience** – true, a child is often disobedient, but, paradox though it may seem, a child’s natural instinct is to obey, looking up to adults as examples for them to follow.

While young we have **not** yet learned the pride and false independence which separates a person from their fellow human beings and from their Creator God.

**A child’s trust** – this is seen in a child’s acceptance of adult authority, and a belief that their father knows everything and is always right.

**A child’s confidence in other adult people** – it is a unique fact about a child that they do **not** expect any person to be a bad person, and will make friends with a perfect stranger. A child still believes the best about other people.

**A child has a short memory** – they have **not** yet learned to bear grudges or nourish bitterness, even when unjustly treated.

A child forgets so completely that they do not even need to forgive.

Indeed such adults will be children in the created family of God, the Kingdom of God.

**Mark 10:17-22** [New King James] *“Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?’ So Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not bear false witness,” “Do not defraud,” “Honour your father and your mother.”’ And he answered and said to Him, ‘Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.’ Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.’ But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”*

**This young man came to Jesus Christ wondering what he could do, he left seeing what he could not do.**

This challenge of Jesus Christ exposes a barrier that could keep this young man out of the Kingdom of God, his love for money and all it represented in his life.

**Money represented the pride of his personal accomplishments and self-effort.**

This attitude made him unable to keep the first commandment, to let nothing be more important than God, [Exodus 20:3; Matthew 6:24].

What barriers are keeping you from turning your life over to Jesus Christ for Him to use?

Jesus showed genuine love for this man, even though He knew that this man would not follow Him. Love is able to give tough advice, it does not have to “*hedge around*” the truth, [Proverbs 27:6].

**Jesus Christ loved us enough to die for us, He also loves us enough to tell us the truth, even when it hurts.**

Jesus Christ was asking a basic and essential question we all must face in our lives, “*How much do we love our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ?*”

**Romans 12:1** [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

**Do we surrender our lives to follow Jesus Christ to show our gratitude for His grace towards us, for He has done what we could never do, cleanse us of the sins we have committed by being a substitute sacrifice for our deserved death.**

Daily laying aside our desires in life to follow Jesus Christ and place all our energy and resources at His disposal and trust Him to guide us in our life.

The Greek word translated “*bodies*” is “*soma*” meaning whole life, physical body, mind and human spirit, [Job 32:8].

**Mark 10:23-27** [New King James] *“Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, ‘How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!’ And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, ‘Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.’ And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves,*

*'Who then can be saved?' But Jesus looked at them and said, 'With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.'*"

**Popular Jewish morality believed that wealth was a sign of God's favour, therefore prosperity was the sign of a good person.**

No wonder the disciples were surprised by Jesus Christ's statement.

**Material possessions tend to fix a person's heart on this world, not on our life beyond the grave, [Matthew 6:33].**

If a person's main interest is in material possessions it tends to make them think of everything in terms of price.

**Prosperity can so very easily make a person arrogant, proud, self-satisfied and worldly, not realising that wealth is a responsibility.**

**A person will be judged by two standards: how they obtained their possessions and how they use their possessions, remembering all the time that we are only stewards of what belongs to the Creator God for a short period of time, [Deuteronomy 10:14; Haggai 2:8].**

Jesus Christ stated the whole doctrine of salvation in a short statement.

Salvation depending on human effort is impossible for salvation in the end is a gift from God, a result of His grace and love.

**Mark 10:28-31** [New King James] *"Then Peter began to say to Him, 'See, we have left all and followed You.' So Jesus answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.'*"

Peter had just seen a man deliberately refuse Jesus Christ's invitation to follow Him. In effect Jesus Christ had said that this man's actions had shut him out from the Kingdom of God.

Peter could not help drawing the contrast between this man and himself and the other disciples.

With almost crude honesty Peter wanted to know what he and the other disciples would get out of their decision to follow Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ's answer falls into three sections.

Whatever they had given up would return to them 100-fold in this life, although not necessarily in the same form.

**For example, someone may be rejected by their family for accepting Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Master, but they will gain a much larger family of believers.**

**Jesus Christ honestly added to this reward of a greater loving family would come persecutions, Jesus Christ never told His disciples that to follow Him would be an easy way of life, to be a Christian is a costly way of life, one of sacrifice.**

Jesus Christ never used a bribe to make a person follow Him, He used a challenge, to live a completely new and different way of life to the rest of society.

All would receive a reward but it would **not** be found in this world's society but in a new world to come, [Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 22:28-30].

Jesus Christ then added one warning that the final judgement is with God.

Many people may stand well in the judgement of this world's society, but the judgement of God may well upset this worldly judgement.

**Also a person may stand well in their own judgement, and find that God's evaluation of their life very different.**

**This is a warning against pride.**

This is a warning that the ultimate judgement belongs alone to God for only He knows the true motives of a person's heart and mind, [Psalms 139:1-4].

**The corrupt condition of our society encourages a confusion of values.**

We are bombarded by messages that tell us how to be important and how to feel good, all of which make Jesus Christ's teaching about the service to others seem alien, [Matthew 20:26-27].