

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final
Authority

Let's pray...

[Mar 9:38-50 NKJV] 38 Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us." 39 But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. 40 "For he who is not against us is on our side. 41 "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward. 42 "But whoever causes one

of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. 43 "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched-- 44 "where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.' 45 "And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched-- 46 "where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.' 47 "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than

**having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire-- 48 "where
'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.'
49 "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every
sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. 50 "Salt [is] good,
but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it?
Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one
another."**

Over the past couple of weeks, we have been seen Jesus trying to teach His disciples about the Kingdom of God.

However, the disciples are having a hard time grasping what Jesus is attempting to teach them.

They have been witnesses to miracles – to wonders – as Jesus calmed the storm before them or Jesus multiplying the bread and the fish in His hands.

Last week we saw this inner circle of Jesus (Peter, James and John) witness the transfiguration with their own eyes and hear with their ears God speak.

They have been privileged in receiving a revelation from God – as when Peter declared that Jesus, is the Christ.

However, it appears that every time they take two steps forward, they take two steps back.

They forgot the lesson of Jesus calming the storm the first time, they forgot the lesson of Jesus feeding the multitudes the first time.

And to make matters worse, the disciples are now disputing among themselves, who among them would be the greatest...

However, notice that Jesus did not abandon His disciples.

He didn't say, "I need 12 new guys because these dudes are not getting it."

Church, in many ways, our Christian walk is similar to that of the disciples. We take two steps forward and then we suffer a setback.

And just like Jesus did not abandon His disciples, He will not abandon you and me.

So Jesus is in the process of teaching them about humility – He knows that they have been discussing among themselves regarding who will be the greatest – and then it is John's turn to stick his foot in his mouth.

[Mar 9:38 NKJV] 38 Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us

casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us."

In other words, Jesus, we saw someone serving someone else, in Your name, and we told him to stop because he wasn't part of our inner circle.

Now, we looked at an event last week where some of the disciples could not cast out a demon.

Apparently, this other guy is doing a much better job that they are – and the disciples told him to stop.

Why did they tell him to stop?

John told Jesus that this man was doing it in Jesus' name.

Could it be because they were jealous of him or envious of him???

Jesus responds by telling the disciples not to stop him.

In verse 40, Jesus says “Anyone who is not against us is for us.”

Turn with me to Phil 1,

We will see Paul demonstrate the mindset that the disciples should have had.

[Phi 1:15-18 NKJV] 15 Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: 16 The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; 17 but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. 18 What then? Only [that] in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

Paul was in prison. And there were people that were bathmouthing him as they preached the gospel.

All Paul cared about was the Christ is preached – that His will was getting done. And this made Paul rejoice. He wasn't worried about the rest.

The disciples were worried about their reputation. They were worried about what others were going to think of them. How others were going to perceive them.

[Mar 9:41 NKJV] 41 "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

A cup of water is the simplest thing that one can give someone else.

Anything done in the Name of Christ, that is indeed consistent with the will of God, will not go unrewarded.

This is an important word for those of us who like to draw tight little lines around the Kingdom of God, settling on us versus them mindset.

Denominations, movements, groups, factions, labels do not define the Church.

The Church is made up of all those, regardless of color, culture, ethnicity, and even denominational label, who genuinely believe in Jesus Christ as Lord & Savior.

Jesus makes it clear here that we ought to be far more

concerned with the things that unite us than the things we

disagree on.

[Mar 9:42 NKJV] 42 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

Remember, Jesus is still holding on to this small child as He is teaching the disciples.

To cause someone to stumble here isn't referring to simply causing someone to sin. But, to cause someone to fall away from trusting Jesus.

How is this done?

Through the way we treat those that are weak and needy.

Do we reach out to them or do we simply ignore them.

Through our own walk – do we live a life that pushes others away from Christ instead of causing others to draw close to Him.

Because the consequences of causing others to stumble are severe.

Drowning in the deepest part of the sea is better than the consequences of causing someone to stumble.

From verses 43-48 Jesus provides the disciples and us as well, with the urgency to take drastic measures against sin.

By cutting off our hand, if it causes us to sin,

By cutting off our foot, if it causes us to sin

By plucking out our eye, if it causes us to sin.

Now, Jesus didn't say these things so that we may take them literally.

If we did take this literally, we would all be stumps right now.

The problem is not in our limbs or our eyes it is our hearts.

Jesus wants to make sure that we realize that we have to take drastic measures in our lives so that we will not stumble in our walk and succumb to sin.

This means that we do not dabble in sin.

This means we are not to live compromised lives.

This means we are not to adopt a lazy and casual attitude toward immorality.

And here this is the first time that Jesus speaks to His disciples about "hell" in the gospel of Mark.

The word **hell** is an ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew word for “Valley of Hinnom.”

The Valley of Hinnom was a place outside Jerusalem’s walls desecrated by those who worshipped the idol Molech in the Old Testament.

And the way that people worshipped Molech is that they would get newborn babies and place them in the arms of the smoldering idol of Molech.

This place was turned into a dump where trash was burned continuously.

The smoldering fires and festering worms made it a graphic and effective picture of the fate of the damned.

In the book of Revelation, this place is called the lake of fire, a place designated for Satan and his demons

And God doesn't want you and me to go there.

In fact, God did the ultimate thing to keep you and me from hell. He sent His Son to die on a cross and die in our place.

And now the only thing that would cause one to go to hell is if we refuse to trust in Jesus.

Hell is a real place church.

[Mar 9:49-50 NKJV] 49 "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. 50 "Salt [is] good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another."

In the book of Romans,

Paul tells us **[Rom 12:1 NKJV] 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, [which is] your reasonable service.**

And in the book of Leviticus, we are told that God commanded that all of His sacrifices be seasoned with salt. To be seasoned with fire refers to tribulation and suffering. So what Jesus is stating here is that we are to present our lives as a living sacrifice seasoned in tribulation and suffering.

[Mar 10:1-12 NKJV] 1 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. 2 The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce [his] wife?" testing Him. 3 And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" 4 They said, "Moses permitted [a man] to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss [her]."

There were two main religious sects among the Jews – The Pharisees and the Sadducees.

The Pharisees were the staunch conservatives while the Sadducees were the more liberal sect.

And it seems that they all their time debating each other.

And there was a long running debate among these two groups. And it centered on the subject of divorce.

Turn with me to the book of Deut.

[Deu 24:1-4 NKJV] 1 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts [it] in her hand, and sends her out of his house, 2 "when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's [wife], 3 "[if] the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts [it] in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, 4 "[then] her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that [is] an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not

bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you [as] an inheritance.

The debate centered over what the meaning of the words,

no favor in his eyes because he has found some

uncleanness means???

And two groups had a different understanding of what those words meant because of the teaching of two rabbis.

Hillel and Shammai.

Rabbi Shammai interpreted it as meaning that if the woman was caught in adultery that was ground for the issuing of a certificate of divorce.

While Rabbi Hillel, interpreted it as meaning that if the woman simply displeased the husband – let's say she

burned the food or didn't keep the house clean, that was grounds for issuing a certificate of divorce.

In the eyes of the Pharisees, this was a crucial test to determine if Jesus was someone who had a liberal or conservative view of the Word of God.

If Jesus turned out to side with Hillel, then they would just have more ammo to use in opposing Him.

If He sided with them, then they'd come off looking better in the debate with the Sadducees.

Little did they know there was a different take on the whole issue of divorce than they'd perceived.

Keep in mind that the Pharisees and the Sadducees were only interested on what the grounds of divorce are.

5 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

6 "But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' 7 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, 8 'and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." 10 In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same [matter]. 11 So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. 12 "And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

So Jesus begins by reminding them that Moses allowed them the concession of divorce because of their hardened hearts.

In other words, it was because of their inability to forgive one another and their unwillingness to restore their relationship – that is why divorce was permitted.

Also, it would provide the wife with some sort of protection of having to live with a husband that hated her.

Jesus then transitions to God's intentions for marriage.

You see, the Pharisees were questioning the grounds for divorce – but they really didn't have an understanding of God's intention of marriage.

And that is why Jesus takes them back to the basics of marriage.

We must remember that marriage is God's institution – not man's.

The bond between husband and wife has to be a stronger bond than that of a parent to a child.

It is not only a physical bond but a spiritual one as well.

I asked you to underline the phrases be joined, one flesh, no longer two.

You see, the problem with the interpretation of the Pharisees was that they made adultery a requirement for divorce! A

husband or wife whose mate had been unfaithful had to divorce them.

Jesus said, "No! Divorce is not required, it's permitted. But God's higher will & desire is repentance & reconciliation."

Exceptions

[Mat 19:8-9 NKJV] 8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, **except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."**

Sexual immorality = adultery or fornication. Once again, it is allowed but not required.

[1Co 7:12-15 NKJV] 12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and

she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. 13
And a woman who has a husband who does not believe,
if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. 14
For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife,
and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband;
otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they
are holy. 15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart;
a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such
[cases]. But God has called us to peace.

What Paul is speaking about here is if a believer is married to an unbeliever and the spouse abandons them - the Christian is not under bondage to the marriage covenant.

This means they are, in fact, free to remarry because God has recognized their divorce as a valid divorce.

Though God allows for divorce in some circumstances, God's first desire is that we try and work things out.

Even with the sin of adultery, God's first choice is that we learn to see repentance, forgiveness, and restoration.

I have a quote I recently read about marriage and I wanted to share it with you today.

It is from a pastor, and he writes,

“Many individuals mistakenly believe that God gave them a mate to meet their needs, then they are discouraged and angry when their needs aren't met. Couples come to us as pastors for marital counseling complaining that their spouses don't meet their needs, emotionally, materially, intellectually, sexually, or otherwise.

We have to tell them that God never intended for spouses to meet each other's needs. Jesus will meet your needs, not your husband or wife. And, when you are sincerely looking to Him to supply all your needs, finding all your sufficiency in God, you will approach your marriage not for what your partner can give you but for what you can give him [or her] in Jesus' name"

[Mar 10:13-16 NKJV] 13 Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought [them]. 14 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. 15 "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of

God as a little child will by no means enter it." 16 And He took them up in His arms, laid [His] hands on them, and blessed them.

I want to draw your attention to verse 15 – whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.

What is childlike faith and how do we get it???

- By receiving

Children are powerless, helpless, totally dependent on receiving from their parent. The only effort they make is to ask, even nag their parent for what they want. What they have they must receive. To get something they ask hoping and believing their request will be answered. **We need to approach God with great expectation to receive the gift of**

eternal life, He is all too willing to give us what we ask for of Him by grace through faith in His Son Jesus.

- By depending on Him

Children depend on their parent or parents to cope in life.

They depend on their parents to provide for them, to protect them, to lead and teach them.

Everything a child has comes from their parent's provision.

We likewise, need to depend humbly on God and trust Him.

- We must trust and have faith in our Father

The same way that a little child grabs his or her parents hand as they cross the street or whenever they are scared, we too, no matter what circumstance we find ourselves in,

we need to take the hand of Jesus in faith and trust Him. We need to take Jesus at His word by faith.

- Most importantly, we must receive the kingdom of God as a little child – because we surely will by no means enter it by what we do or earn.

Amen.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

CALVARY
Santa Cruz

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

