

The Gospel of Mark – Part 35
Marriage and Divorce – Mark 10:1-12
Mosaic Rockford – Dave Spooner – May 17th, 2020

Intro:

- This morning we are moving to Mark 10 as Jesus continues to move toward Jerusalem. Chapter 10 is the last chapter before the “triumphal entry” in Mark chapter 11. In chapter 10 we see Jesus being questioned about divorce, we see Him interacting with children, His conversation with a “rich young ruler” and the healing of blind Bartimaeus.
- The section for this morning is focused on the teaching of Jesus on the subject marriage and divorce. My hope is that from this passage you will gain more insight into God’s original design and desire for marriage, why and when divorce is allowed and when one is free to remarry. These teachings are foundational in the most important and sacred relationship in humanity and in these teaching, God guides us in this relationship.
- Chapter 9 left off with Jesus and His disciples in the region of Galilee and the town of Capernaum where Jesus taught them about true greatness, ministry to the faith of children and the seriousness of sin with a series of “it is better” teachings.

Mark 10:1 ESV

And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.

- Jesus and His disciples were moving southward through the country with the final destination being Jerusalem (**refer to slide**). Crowds and critics were still gathering to Him, and He did take time to minister and interact with them as He continued to focus on training and equipping the 12 for what was to come, and for their ministry after He was gone.
- While they were in the region of Judea, the Pharisees came out to test Him on what He would say about the issue of marriage and divorce as it related to the law of Moses. This is where we come to our first point.

Divorce is allowed not desired

Mark 10:2-5 ESV

And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” 3 He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” 4 They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.” 5 And Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.

- The “test” of Jesus was twofold. The first was a debate between two “schools of thought” when it came to the meaning of the passage given by Moses (Deut. 24:1-4) that allowed for divorce. One school interpreted Moses very widely making divorce allowable for most any reason (including a bad meal). Where the other opinion held to more strict guidelines as to when divorce would be allowed.
- Another reason why they choose this subject to test Jesus is because He was now in the region that was governed by Herod, who imprisoned and eventually beheaded John the Baptist because of His teaching and direct confrontation with Herod about his marriage which was “unlawful” by

the scriptures. If Jesus gave a similar teaching as John the Baptist, then perhaps Herod would find out and arrest Him as well, or if He gave a different teaching than John the Baptist it would create a division in His followers and perhaps slow down or split up the movement and momentum. The Pharisees used this question at this time not because they wanted His insight on the matter, but to “test” Him with the motivation of causing division or His demise.

- Knowing all this, Jesus responded by teaching the reason why this command was given in the first place. Jesus referred back to what had been already written by God for them – giving authority to and drawing authority from the word of God – by asking them what the text actually says “what did Moses command you?”. They answered rightly by quoting the text “**Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.**” And then instead of answering the question directly, “**Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?**” Jesus gives them an answer to the questions that they should have been asking instead . . . “why did Moses have to give this command about marriage?” or perhaps better yet “how can we best honor God in our marriage?” Jesus pointed out that the reason for the command is the bigger problem “**“Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment”**”.
- God made a concession out of His mercy to protect those who are married to a hard-hearted person. Hard-heartedness is the real reason why people are allowed to get divorced. People are never commanded to get divorced by scripture, but they are allowed to do so because of the hard-heartedness of a marriage partner who breaks the covenant vows of marriage. This was never the desire nor what it the design of marriage.

God’s original design for marriage

Mark 10:6-9 ESV

But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ 7 ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, 8 and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. 9 What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

- In the beginning God made us “male and female” two separate beings with a distinct and complementary design who were formed and fashioned for each other. From this statement God defines how many genders there are and what constitutes a marriage – one man with one woman. **From one, He made two and from two He makes one.**
- The bond in marriage is to be the priority relationship even over the bond that comes from children to their parents – in marriage we are to “leave” father and mother and “hold fast” to each other. And to the man He particular says that you need to intentionally make your relationship with your wife your primary relationship and you are the one that is to hold fast to your wife, for her sake and for yours.
- And this “holding fast” means to make sure your bonds are secure and you are completely connected with her and are bound to her, not in a sense at all for control but for connection and communion because of covenant. That you are no longer two by “one flesh”. That how one treats their spouse is how they treat themselves and what happens to one happens to them both. The husband laying his life down for his wife and the wife giving her life up for her husband – and this to be an image of Christ and the church and so that they can produce Godly fruit from their lives (see Eph. 5:22-33; Mal. 2:13-15).

- God is the one who joins them together in marriage and God is the one who is also a witness to the vows that are given to each other on the day of their wedding. (The vows are the most important element of any wedding ceremony). God is also the one who holds us accountable to those vows that we made in front of Him and in front of people.
- God was confronting His priests and His people on a number of issues in the last book of the Old Testament. And one of the issues that God called them out on is their marriages.

Mal 2:13-15 NIV

Another thing you do: You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. ¹⁴ You ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

¹⁵ Has not [the Lord] made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.

- Here is the key to a lasting marriage. Love God. If you love God, you want to please God and it pleases Him that we would remain faithful to our vows we made to our spouse. And in order to do that we have to guard our spirits and guard our hearts so that they will not become hard toward one another . . . and if we don't we will end up with hard marriages or in divorce. What God has joined together, let no person separate.

Mal 2:16

"I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering his mistreatment as with a garment," says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.

- If you want to know how God feels about divorce, He hates it. And why does He hate it? Because it is the fruit of unfaithfulness and mistreatment that comes from a heart that has become hard. Divorce never was or is the ideal, no person in their right mind gets married in hopes to be divorce, I have done tons of wedding and this has never been the case.
- God through Moses allowed divorce because of a hard heart. Jesus allowed for divorce as well as recorded in Matt. 5:32 and Matt. 19:9 for the same reason.

Matt 19:8-9 NIV

Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. ⁹ I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

- There is a justifiable reason for getting a divorce, that one is unfaithful to their spouse by being unfaithful to their vows. *It is not a sin to get divorced. Divorce is a result of sin that has occurred by the offending party because of their hardness of heart.* Just as marriage should be entered into

with serious consideration, investigation and counsel, marriage should not be ended without serious consideration, investigation and counsel.

Divorce, remarriage and adultery

Mark 10:10-12 ESV

And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11 And he said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

- Again, we see Jesus giving more time to explain in more detail to those He was equipping for their ministry. They had more questions, and Jesus gave them time to ask their questions. Jesus confirmed that in anyone chooses to divorce *for any other reason besides marital unfaithfulness* is still in God’s eyes married to their original spouse and if they choose to remarry are committing adultery. Either the man or the women may initiate the divorce, but it must be done because of marital unfaithfulness stemming from a hard heart in order to be valid and the site of God.
- In any remarriage situation, make sure to examine the reason for the original divorce to know if the remarriage is what should be pursued and supported.

Conclusion

- God highly values marriage, and each one of us should strive to love God and be faithful to our vows.
- Make sure you are paying attention to your heart, examine yourself and ask God to show you if you have any hardness toward your spouse. Ask God for wisdom and for His heart for your spouse. If you find that your heart has become hard toward your spouse, remember the heights from which you have fallen, repent and return to what you did at first (**Rev. 2:4** – this passage was given in context about our relationship with the Lord but it is also applicable to our relationship with our spouse)
- If you are in a relationship where you or your spouse have violated or are in violation of your vows, seek counsel and/change your ways and seek His will what you should do.