

Mark 10.1-16

Belonging to God

Sermon – Going PUSH MANY EMOTIONAL Buttons – Hard to be NEUTRAL
Word DIVORCE – TRIGGERS Deep Feelings – Your OWN or For OTHERS

One Reason I Like PREACHING THRU BOOKS of Bible

Have to PREACH it ALL – What is BEFORE Us – NOT just FAVORITE Themes
When Topic COMES People KNOW Preacher NOT Picking on Them & Problems
God’s Word IMPORTANT Message for ALL: Single, Married, Divorced, Widows

Chapters 1-9 Jesus in Galilee / Chapters 10-15 Jesus in Judea

Mark gives SELECTIVE Events NOT EXHAUSTIVE Record of ALL Jesus Did
LAST Verse in the LAST Gospel Written: Jesus did many other things as well. If
every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would
not have room for the books that would be written. John 21:25

Mark: TOPICAL & THEOLOGICAL Arrangement of EVENTS to Present JESUS

v. 1 Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the
Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught
them.

Out of GALILEE – IN JUDEA – Heading for JERUSALEM

IN Trans-Jordan area RULED by HEROD Antipas

Earlier Herodias LEFT husband Phillip to marry King Herod

Local TABLOID Media filled SENSATIONAL STORIES - ROYAL ROMANCE

John the Baptist had BEEN KILLED > BOLD Denouncement of SCANDAL

Maybe WHY Pharisees wanted JESUS to give HIS IDEAS about DIVORCE

1. Contract 2. Covenant 3. Child

1. Contract: Legal Arrangement

a. Test v. 2 Some Pharisees came and tested him...

NOT Come for LEARNING but LURING > into Dangerous, Deep Water

GOOD Topic to AROUSE Controversy – THEN and NOW – Ever RELEVANT

No Matter WHAT ANSWER Jesus Gave He would ANGER SOMEONE!

word *Test / Tempted* used by Mark 4 X's > 1st Ref SATAN in WILDERNESS

ALL 4 Times > Context is MISHANDLING of Scripture

NOT Everything Jesus BELIEVED and TAUGHT about MARRIAGE/DIVORCE

CONTEXT – RESPONSE to their TRICK QUESTION –

Jesus seeks to both EXPOSE Falsehood & EDUCATE the Faithful

b. Tricks v. 2 "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

Legal Approach to MARRIAGE: Contract – FOCUS on RULES and REGS

PHARISEES Good LAWYERS > Looking for LOOP-HOLES in CONTRACT

Pharisees – 2 Schools of Thought on DIVORCE

Rabbi Shammai - STRICT View, Divorce ONLY for Unfaithfulness

Rabbi Hillel - LIBERAL view, wife cooks a bad meal, quarrelsome, if you find a more beautiful woman, *"anything which caused annoyance or embarrassment to a husband was a legitimate ground for a divorce suit."*

If she go not as you would have her go, cut her off from your flesh and give her a bill of divorce. Joshua ben Sira c. 200 B.C.

Today's SOCIETY - Great Concern for our RIGHTS - DEADLY IN MARRIAGE

Jesus IGNORED the CURRENT DEBATES and Taught BIBLE to Crowds

Jesus puts THEM to the TEST > What DOES BIBLE Teach?

v. 3 "What did Moses command you?" he replied.

SCORED Some POINTS with Pharisees > their HERO was MOSES

Pharisees QUICKLY Answered > Moses PERMITTED Divorce

v. 4 They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away."

If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds *something indecent about her*, and he writes her a *certificate of divorce*, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. Deuteronomy 24.1-4

Jewish Leaders DEBATED over what exactly is DETESTABLE INDECENCY?

1) Context

Law for MEN – JEWISH Women could NOT DIVORCE > but had SOME Rights

OT Jews NEIGHBOR Tribes Women had NO RIGHTS
Who NEEDS DIVORCE when you could KILL your WIFE?

It is generally held that divorce in Islam is very easy; a man only has to say to his wife: "You're divorced," three times and its all over...marriage in Islam is primarily a contract and not a sacrament...if the contract was entered into with a verbal statement of "I do," and witnesses, it should be dissoluble with the statement "I don't," and witnesses. www.MuslimBridges.org

Moses > WRITING BILL – DELIBERATE Act – TIME & THOUGHT

Perhaps ON REFLECTION Husband have SECOND THOUGHTS

Bill given to WOMEN – for Her to SHOW STATUS to Future Husband, Family

2) Concession

v. 4 They said, "Moses *permitted* a man to write a certificate of divorce

A Concession BECAUSE IN FALLEN WORLD - MARRIAGES FAIL
 BETTER an EASY Divorce than OPEN ADULTERY & Even ABUSE
 NOT PERMISSION for Divorce > RESTRICT its EASE and SPEED

Perhaps the toleration of polygamy in Old Testament times is another instance of the outworking of the same principle, as being permitted in early days, but never praised, and never seen as God's plan for humanity. R. Alan Cole

PROBLEM with LEGAL Focus > EXCEPTION becomes NORMAL PRACTICE
 When EMPHASIS is on the RULES and BOUNDARIES > How to GET OUT?
 Marriage STATIC/ STALE > Only question LEGALLY Married > Not Thriving

3) Clarification

Moses INTENTION > LEGAL Barrier to CARELESS SINNING

Pharisees had distorted Law of God - Sermon on Mt. > CORRECTIONS

Jesus was NOT CONTRADICTING Moses – was CLARIFYING God's Intention

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them...It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery." Matthew 5.17,31,32

The first century was a time in which divorce was perilously easy and common, whether in Judaism or paganism...we must not water down the words of Jesus, even if they are as unwelcome and unfashionable to us as they were to His disciples. R. Alan Cole

4) Just Causes? – is Divorce EVER Allowed?

v. 10 When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this.

PATTERN of MARK > Takes DISCIPLES aside and TEACHES in House
 Today HEAR Sermon > DISCUSS: Small Groups, House Meetings, Fellowship

FEW RARE CIRCUMSTANCES - DIVORCE CAN BE A NECESSARY EVIL
ONLY ALTERNATIVE IN AN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION

1. Unfaithfulness > **Committing SEXUAL SIN against your SPOUSE**

"I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, *except for marital unfaithfulness*, and marries another woman commits adultery." Matthew 19.9

NOT a Reason in LAW of MOSES > MOSES – ADULTERY = DEATH

Does NOT say YOU MUST HAVE DIVORCE AFTER UNFAITHFULNESS

OT EXAMPLE OF Faithful, Forgiving Love of HOSEA for Wayward GOMER

2. Desertion > **Abandoning your SPOUSE because of their FAITH in Christ**

If the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. 1 Corinthians 7.15

Deut 24 Protection from ABUSE – Verbal, Emotional, Physical – Right to LEAVE

Wife NOT Commanded to STAY and be BEATEN trying to Save Marriage

EXCEPTIONS > EXPOSE Sin they do NOT EXCUSE it

Not meant to be LOOP HOLES they are TRAGEDIES

c. Tragedy

v. 5 "It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied.

MARRIAGE was GIFT from FATHER > DIVORCE IS ALWAYS A TRAGEDY

REASON so DISCONTENT w/ MARRIAGE : Hearts are HARDENED agnst God

BEGIN - Tender Love, Great Expectations, Unlimited Possibilities

ENDS- Pain, Alienation, Disillusionment, Guilt, Insecurity, Anger

FOR COUPLE, CHILDREN, AND EXTENDED FAMILY

"Divorce" WORD MEANS "to throw away"

THROW AWAY SOCIETY - Throw Away Family, Promise, Integrity
 Marriage – Most BASIC Unit of Society – Break Marriage Promise – Break Society

May Wonder *What does God Think of Divorce?*: **He Hates It**

Guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.
"I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel. Malachi 2:15,16

GOD HATES DIVORCE - because KNOWS & HATES Pain it causes FOR LIFE

IT DOES NOT SAY THAT GOD HATES DIVORCED PEOPLE

SCARS AND PAIN WILL OFTEN REMAIN FOR LIFE - KIDS TOO

"...children who were less than six years old when their parents divorced were by far the loneliest as adults..." University of Virginia, Study on Loneliness

GOD has Come so we can BELONG to Him > Not be THROWN AWAY

2. Covenant: Lasting Accord

Pharisees debate DIVORCE > Jesus lifts discussion to MARRIAGE

COVENANT Not a CONTRACT > LIVING & LOVING RELATIONSHIP

HOW CAN I NURTURE IT, DEEPEN IT, MAKE IT FLOURISH?

BIBLE IS NOT A LEGAL RULE BOOK - BUT BOOK OF LIFE

MODERN Advancements have NOT Changed MAKER'S Wisdom

When a marriage begins to fail, only re-treading, and re-following the Maker's instructions can repair and save it... If this basic creation design were overthrown, moral, spiritual, psychological and social chaos would result. Sinclair Ferguson

IT IS CALLED CALIFORNIA!

a. Creation

v. 6 "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'

FOUNDATION > What did God CREATE Marriage to BE in BEGINNING?

QUOTES PART OF TWO VERSES FROM GENESIS 1 and 2

ONE MAN with ONE WOMAN for LIFE > God NEVER Changed

1) Creation Mandate > **Man cannot fulfill his duty ALONE**

God blessed them and said to them, "*Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground*" Genesis 1:28

2) Companionship > **Only WOW! MAN! can fill man's inner loneliness**

The LORD God said, "*It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.*" Genesis 2:18

3) Conjugal Relations > **Sharing a Deep PHYSICAL Intimacy**

Since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The *husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.* The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other 1 Corinthians 7:2-5

4) Children > **Sometimes - NOT ALWAYS - given to Married Couples**

Sons are a heritage from the LORD, *children a reward from him.* Psalm 127:3

b. Commitment

vs. 7-9 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

If NOT READY to leave MAMA and PAPA not ready to become a Mama & Papa

Biblical Marriage Voluntarily LEAVE CLOSEST Social Bond > Parent and Child

CREATE New and DEEPER Bond of Man and Wife in MARRIAGE

We THINK NOTHING OF - Studying Driving, Computer, Foreign Languages

As Pastor > Called to MARRY COUPLE that DAY - ALL ELSE ARRANGED!
NO TIME for COUNSEL, ADVICE, PRAYER, REFLECTION – We're in Love!

Great Plans for DRESSES, DRINKS, DESTINATION of Honeymoon
VOWS? PROMISE you will make to Eachother & GOD before Witnesses! HUH?

PEOPLE CAN - AND DO - SEPARATE WHAT GOD HAS JOINED
BUT THEY ARE WELL ADVISED BY JESUS NOT TO DO SO

To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. 1 Corinthians 7.10,11

EARTHLY MARRIAGE - Reflects HEAVENLY MARRIAGE

GOD of Israel - MARRIED ISRAEL at SINAI – Honeymooned in WILDERNESS

JESUS CHRIST - BRIDEGROOM // Coming Back for CHURCH - HIS BRIDE

c. Consequences

vs. 11,12 He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

Jesus BOLDLY Stands with John the MARTYR Condemning Herod & Herodias

Jesus LIFTS STATUS and RESPONSIBILITY of Women beyond JEWISH Law

HARD SAYINGS - EQUALITY - LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

Gospel offers NO EASY BLANK CHECK for DIVORCE and REMARRIAGE

The decisive 'No' to divorce provides the required safeguard against human selfishness which always threatens to destroy marriage.

William Lane

3. Child: Loving Acceptance

LOGICAL SEQUENCE of Gospel Story > 1st MARRIAGE, THEN Children

v. 13 People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them

BLESSING of Children done by RECOGNIZED RABBI'S

SIGN of TRUST and RESPECT of Jesus by PARENTS

Masculine Pronoun > Kids brought by FATHERS for Blessing

How DREADFUL to think Spiritual Growth is JOB of MOTHER

a. Small-minded Disciples

SMALL minded about WORST Topic to be Small-minded about > GOD

IF your GOD is SMALL - YOU have to be BIG – THAT is most Foolish Thought

If GOD is Small > YOU must be WISER, STRONGER, and BETTER than HIM

DISCIPLES KNEW BEST: v. 13 ...but the disciples rebuked them.

Jesus TOO BUSY – TOO IMPORTANT – NO TIME of Insignificant KIDS

Children have NO STANDING in 1st Cent Society – No LEGAL Rights

STATUS of Kids in 21st Cent – Most Countries of World – NOT Much Better

Modern World – Kids not Elected President – Sit on Important Boards

Disciples > LIVE in WORLD and THINK Like World – re. Kids AND Marriage

Heard Jesus DEMAND Life LONG Commitment of ONE MAN & ONE WOMAN

The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."
Matthew 19.10

Disciples STUNNED by Jesus' Words > How?! NOBODY Lives like THAT!'

b. Streaming into the Kingdom

vs. 14,15 Jesus...said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

DISCIPLES and PHARISEES seem to be WORKING TOGETHER Doing BEST

To KEEP People OUT of Kingdom > Kids, Marriage Problems, Sinners

Jesus – KING of KINGDOM of God – Gives LIFE to get People IN

PRIMARY AGENDA of God of Universe > Invite People to BELONG to Him

Cry of GOD from Gen to Revel / Cry of Savior from Cross > Let them COME!

1) Mercy not Merit

ALL Kids go to HEAVEN?? > No! Reason WHY Jesus wants them to COME

These are KIDS of PARENTS who BELIEVE and OBEY Jesus

Parents are FOLLOWERS and they will TEACH Kids to FOLLOW

Parents REFUSE Jesus they're also REJECTING Exposure for Kids

Jesus is speaking about children whose parents are already disciples (and will in turn 'disciple' them). Such parents know they need to teach their children the responsibilities of kingdom life, as well as the privileges of kingdom possession. If the blessings of God are forfeited in disobedience, they are forfeited. Sinclair Ferguson

v. 15 "anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it"

Widely MISUNDERSTOOD Verse > What WE must BE LIKE to enter Kingdom
Humble – Willing – Gentle – Submissive – Angelic > Like a Kid > *Whose Kids??*

MUSLIMS > Child is PURE, SPIRIT is BIG, BODY is SMALL

Total trust is the centre of a child's existence, so it must be for the disciple.

Donald English

This WRONG Idea is DENIAL of the GOSPEL > NOT based on WORKS

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child...

Proverbs 22:15

We too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were *by nature children of wrath* Ephesians 2.3 NASB

"There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law"

Romans 3:10-20

IF you THINK you have PERFECT MARRIAGE or PERFECT KID > Deceived

Oldest Son Married Last year > Wedding Present Book: *When Sinners say "I Do"*

IF you are going to COME to GOD > Will be act of Sheer GRACE

Kingdom Citizenship > Is a GIFT NOT a RIGHT > based on MERCY Not Merit

We love because he first loved us.

1 John 4:19

We do not DESERVE the Gospel > We come DESPITE who and what we Are

To this MENTAL MIDGETS – Foolish, Selfish, Failing DISCIPLES, Jesus said..

Jesus: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last."

John 15:16

The Kingdom may be entered only by one who knows he is helpless and small, without claim or merit.

William Lane

2) Power for the Impossible

v. 16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

Extends BLESSING of New Covenant to THEM

Jesus ASCENDED in BLESSING and LIVES NOW to BLESS Forever

...he lifted up his hands and blessed them. *While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up to heaven.* Luke 24.50,51

From the fullness of his grace we have all received *one blessing after another.*
John 1.16

JESUS CAME TO GIVE US A NEW LIFE > Life of GREAT BLESSING

NOT HOW TO GET OUT OF MARRIAGE - HOW TO RESURRECT IT

JESUS Came to Bring FREEDOM, NOT for DIVORCE, for MARRIAGE

NOT A NEW LAW, BUT A NEW POWER

PEOPLE DO NOT NEED DIVORCE - THEY NEED CHRIST

DIVORCE - AVOIDS PROBLEMS // CHRIST - REMOVES PROBLEMS

"I do not think there are wrong marriages, only wrong people. There is nothing final and unchangeable about the wrongness of people... I've never seen a marriage that could not be saved. But I have seen plenty that died because one or both partners did not want to pay the price to save the relationship." Marriage Counselor

Be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. *Wives, submit to your husbands* as to the Lord... *Husbands, love your wives,* just as Christ loved the church Ephesians 5:18-25

GOD-Honoring Marriage: Possible for GOD-FILLED Marriage PARTNERS

God NOT COME to THROW us AWAY > but so WE can BELONG to HIM

Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel!...The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." Zephaniah 3:14,17

c. Sorrow of Jesus

v. 13,14 People were bringing little children to Jesus...but the disciples rebuked them. *When Jesus saw this, he was indignant.*

Actions of Disciples was DISTORTION of Kingdom of God
INDIGNANT – word usually reserved for attitude to Pharisees

"Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod." Mark 8:15

They did NOT Get IT – Like MOST of What He Said > *You're Just LIKE THEM!*
Your SMALL, STINGY view of GOD and His GRACE is Just like PHARISEES

SAME Sin > Both Pharisees and Disciples – MISREPRESENT God

Pharisees to People whose MARRIAGES & HEARTS Broken > THROW AWAY
THROW AWAY WIFE – Get an UPGRADE – Thrown away by GOD Himself too
Disciples to Parents: "Jesus has NO TIME or INTEREST in You & Your Kids"

Jesus DIES for WORLD to COME > DISCIPLES of Jesus DRIVE World Away

v. 14 "do not hinder them, *for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these*"

"I am the King in the kingdom of God. I belong to these children and all who are like them"

Do NOT HOLD them Back > Jesus BELONGS to Them

Divorce NO GREATER than OTHER SINS - FAR REACHING IMPLICATIONS

BALANCE > Jesus shows GOD'S LAW and GOD'S LOVE

MANDATE and MERCY – RULES and REDEMPTION – SIN and SALVATION

The Pharisees primary interest lay in seeing how far they could go and still remain within the letter of the law. Jesus' primary interest was in restoring men and women to the lifestyle for which they had been made. Sinclair Ferguson

NO WONDER Jesus was INDIGNANT at DISCIPLES who behaved like Pharisees

Must GUARD the GRACE of GOD > Not PRETEND we are WORTHY of It

NOT try to BLOCK people from GOD > BUT BLESS them with GOD

Mark 10:1-16

1 Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them. 2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" 3 "What did Moses command you?" he replied.

4 They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away." 5 "It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied. 6 "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 7 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, 8 and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

10 When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. 11 He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. 12 And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

13 People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.