

THE MAGNIFICENCE OF MARRIAGE – WEEK 3

Mark 10:1-16

Intro

- Read Mark 10:1-4

Context is always important in understanding scripture correctly, but in order to understand this text particularly, the context is critical. Jesus was not talking to a bunch of divorced people in order to judge them, he was speaking to religious people with an agenda, who were using the topic of divorce to try and cause trouble for him. If Jesus did not agree with Herod's (the ruler of the region he was now in) divorce, he would be in danger, and if he did agree with it, he would be breaking Jewish law. They were setting him up to fail, whichever way he answered.

In order to engage with their questions Jesus referred to Moses's concession for divorce that was given to the rebellious Israelites hundreds of years before. They had little regard for the sanctity of marriage because of their sinful hearts. Divorce was permitted by Moses only to provide a measure of protection for the women who would otherwise have been open to abuse physically, emotionally and socially. But of course over time the lines for when divorce was "permissible" became increasingly blurred among the different groups.

1. The Original Idea Of Marriage Is One Man, With One Woman, For A Lifetime

- Read Mark 10:5-7

Jesus resolved all of their questions about divorce by going back to the story of creation, before Moses's concession was given, to show God's heart towards marriage and what he had designed it for.

Jesus said that the design of marriage was:

- I. For one man and one woman
- II. A covenant relationship
- III. For experiencing physical and spiritual oneness

2. God Hates Divorce, Because God Loves People

- Read Mark 10:9, Malachi 2:16

God does not want marriages to be pulled apart because he created them to be good. Marriage is a testimony to the world of what God's union with the church is like. God hates divorce because of the pain and destruction it brings to all those involved, as well as the witness to him that it destroys.

3. God Allows For Divorce In Some Circumstances

- Read Genesis 21:8-14, Ezra 10:10-11, Jeremiah 3:1-8, Matthew 19:9, Matthew 5:31-32

It is important for us to realise that there *are* some concessions for divorce. This does not mean that God ever wants divorce but that there *are* some grounds that make it *permissible*. This means that wherever possible, marriage should be fought for because God can redeem even the most difficult situations. It also means that people cannot just get divorced for any and every reason.

The 2 clearly biblical grounds for divorce are:

- I. Adultery - Matthew 5:31
- II. Abandonment - 1 Corinthians 7:10-15



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4. The Problem Is Hardness Of Heart, And This Sets The Tone In The Discussion Around Remarriage

- Read Mark 10:10-12

In speaking firmly against divorce in this text, Jesus was addressing the prevailing heart attitude towards marriage, which was one of flippancy and indifference. Our cultures' heart issues towards marriage and divorce are the same today. Jesus was trying to reorient the attitudes and motives of the religious folk who were only conscious of the rules around marriage rather than the heart towards it. When the gospel shapes our hearts, we start to ask different questions about everything, including divorce and remarriage. Instead of asking "under what circumstances can we get divorced?" we might ask, "Have we done everything we can to extend forgiveness, mercy and reconciliation in our marriages, and have we prayed fervently for our spouses in order to mend our broken marriages and pursue reconciliation?"

5. We Are Supposed To Create Environments Where Children Aren't Hindered From Coming To Jesus

- Read Mark 10:13-16

In Malachi 2 God said that he wanted Godly children from marriages. Godly children are those that know God for themselves and who have watched their parents' model love and obedience to Christ in their own lives. Some ways parents model the gospel to their kids are by being present, being quick to forgive, being quick to repent and by being gentle. Whether we have our own children or not we are all modelling the gospel to other people's children in some way. Either we are helps or we are hindrances to them finding the gospel.

Questions on the text:

- ❖ Q: Who was asking Jesus the questions on divorce and remarriage in this text? (Mark 10:2)
- ❖ Q: What was their motive for challenging Jesus on this topic?
- ❖ Q: Why did Moses give a concession for divorce (in some circumstances) to the Israelites?
- ❖ Q: What did Jesus mean when he spoke about the Israelites' "hardness of heart"? (Mark 10:5)
- ❖ Q: In what ways do we also display 'hardness of heart' in our attitudes towards marriage and divorce?
- ❖ Q: What was Jesus' issue with the religious folk who were asking the questions about divorce?

Questions on divorce:

- ❖ Q: What are the 2 clear biblical grounds for divorce in the scripture? Why these ones in particular?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think that these grounds are given to make divorce *permissible* rather than it being an instruction to get divorced?
- ❖ Q: Why does the Bible say "God hates divorce"? (This does not mean God hates people who get divorced!!!)
- ❖ Q: Many of the people in our community have been through a divorce and are unable to reconcile for various reasons. How does the gospel apply to these situations?

Questions on marriage:

- ❖ Q: Why is marriage so important to God?
- ❖ Q: What do you think a gospel-centered marriage looks like?
- ❖ Q: Many people in our community have terrible marriages. How does the gospel apply to these situations?

Questions for the singles:

- ❖ Q: Many people in our community struggle with being single. What encouragement can they take from this passage, and how does the gospel apply to their situation?

