

Marriage According to Jesus

Mark 10:1-12

Good morning.

Chip Ingram has said, *“Imagine a giant 15,000-piece jigsaw puzzle in a big cardboard box.*

Now imagine a married couple locked up in a room together where the only way out, is to solve this jigsaw puzzle without the box top.

Without the box top they won't know what the finished puzzle is supposed to look like. Most marriages are a lot like this scenario.

The pieces of the puzzle represent the different aspects of our marriage, our work, the in-laws, kids, family, money, etc.

Couples that have God's “box top” are able to resolve conflict because they know what normal, healthy conflict looks like.

They also have God's supernatural power to help them to stay committed to their spouse as they go through some of the most trying and stressful times in life.

With God's strength, as they go through these difficult times, they actually grow closer together so that they don't give up.”

Please open your Bibles to **Mark 10** as we continue in that verse-by-verse study.

Last time we were in **Mark**, John came to Jesus and told Him about a man who was casting out demons in Jesus' name.

But this man was not a part of their **inner** circle.

The Disciples were frustrated and jealous because they couldn't cast a demon out earlier; but this guy was casting out demons.

Jesus said in *Mark 9:40 he who is not against us is on our side.*

We ended saying, “*Because Jesus is our Lord and Savior, we know we are His masterpiece; so, we need to represent Him as salt; in a lost, sinful, and dying world.*”

In today's passage, the religious leaders come to Jesus with what they believed was an impossible question,

“*Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?*”

The Pharisees were trying to trap Him, and they believed Jesus had no choice; in their minds, Jesus will either misuse God's Word or alienate the crowds as He answers about divorce.

We need to keep in mind; for a person to try to live up to kingdom standards in the power of the flesh is impossible to do.

Jesus loves and understands you, more than you understand you.

I. The compassion of Jesus.

Read *Mark 10:1*

At this point of the *Gospel of Mark*, Jesus is on the way to Jerusalem for the last time, leading up to His crucifixion.

Jesus has set His face towards the cross, but on the way, the crowds approach Him and Jesus makes time to teach them.

Jesus is the all-knowing God/man, who is fully aware of what He will endure in a few short months.

However, He is still concerned with the needs of the crowd.

Notice, Jesus shows *compassion* by *teaching* them the truth.

In this **same account** in *Matthew's Gospel*, we are told in *Matthew 19:1 He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.*

Matthew 19:2 And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there. NKJV

A Greek English Lexicon translates the word *crowd* as a horde or a mass of people.

Hordes of people gathered to Him, as Jesus made His way towards the Jordan valley heading to His death on the cross. Jesus cared enough to **heal and teach** the crowd.

We were told previously in, *Matthew 14:14, And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. NKJV*

Matthew 14:14 in Greek means “to be *moved in one's bowels for the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity*”.

Jesus was sick to His stomach with *compassion* for the hurting.

Clarke said, “***They followed Him***” “*Some to be instructed; some to be healed; some through curiosity; and some to ensnare Him.*”

So here again, Jesus is concerned with people’s needs, but the religious leaders are only concerned with their agendas.

Jesus came to seek and save the lost, so teaching was not the **exception** to Jesus’ ministry; it was one of the main parts of His earthly ministry.

Matthew Henry said about ‘***He taught them again***’: “*Even those whom Christ has taught, have need to be taught again.*

“*Such is the fulness of the Christian doctrine, there is still more to be learned. “We need to be **reminded** of what we know.”*

As grounded Christ-followers, we are always learning and growing in our faith and in the Word of God.

The Bible instructs, corrects, and helps us to know God’s will.

II. The Pharisees try to trap Jesus.

Read ***Mark 10:2-4***

Jesus very clearly taught in the Gospels the same things that were taught in the Old Testament about divorce.

The Bible tells us that God hates divorce, no doubt. But there are times when things happen, and the Bible allows for divorce.

However, the Christ follower should not look for the loophole in the law; but rather, seek to know God's heart in the matter.

Even with all the Biblical teaching, some Christ-loving Christians still find themselves divorced; even though they did not enter marriages, thinking the marriage would end in divorce.

There are other folks who stay married, while enduring abuse or other non-biblical relationships, trying to honor the Lord.

We will talk about healing, grieving, and forgiveness, from a divorce, in the practical application of the sermon.

As Jesus was teaching these things, He was simply giving God's design for marriage; however, a person trying to live up to kingdom standards in the power of the flesh, is **impossible**.

Chip Ingram said, *"When we get married, we enter into a holy covenant before a holy God who provides supernatural resources.*

And as we lay our life before Him, God outlines His conditions as He shows us His design."

For the most part, the church has failed to help people recover after the devastating effects of a divorce. But Jesus loves you and understands you more than you understand yourself.

After a divorce, there needs to be a time of healing, grieving, and forgiveness.

So here, these religious leaders came to Jesus to ***test*** Him.

Testing can be translated “**Tempting**” meaning to try, examine, to prove, to bring judgment or find fault.

The Pharisees were hoping to trap Jesus and get Him to contradict the Law of Moses, so they could bring some charge against Him to the chief priest.

According to David Guzik, “*Divorce was a controversial topic in Jesus’ day, with two main schools of thought centered around two of its most famous proponents.*”

Rabbi Shammai taught uncleanness meant sexual immorality and said that was the only valid reason for divorce.

Rabbi Hillel taught uncleanness could mean any sort of discretion, even to the point of burning the breakfast, as being valid grounds for divorce.

The Pharisees knew the Law, but they ask Jesus if divorce is lawful, so Jesus asks them what Moses said within the Law.

In **Matthew’s Gospel**, we are given a little more information about this potential trap from these religious leaders.

Matthew 19:3 "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" NKJV

In effect they are asking Jesus, “*Can I divorce for any reason?*”

Again, notice this was “**Testing Him**”.

The Pharisees tried to get Jesus to speak against Moses or against popular thought; they hoped to catch Him in a trap.

If Jesus said a man can divorce for any reason, He would go against God's Word; if He was truthful, it would be **unpopular**.

Marriage was Biblically sacred, but Jewish men regarded women as property that could be thrown away. So, Jesus asks...

Re-read *Mark 10:4*

The Pharisees said, "*Moses permitted us to write divorce papers and send her away*"; but Moses **did not command** divorce; Moses **permitted** it.

III. Why did Moses allow divorce?

Read *Mark 10:5-9*

The religious leaders tried to trick Jesus with the question, "*Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?*" **But...**

Jesus got the Pharisees to admit that Moses did not command a divorce to happen; but rather, Moses permitted a divorce, because of the **hardness** of the people's hearts.

Rabbi Hillel actually taught that it was a righteous **duty** to divorce your wife if she displeased you in any way; but Jesus clearly taught that this rabbis' teaching went against God's will.

In Biblical times in Israel women did not have the right to divorce their husband. It was the man who divorced the wife.

Deuteronomy 24:1 "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. NKJV

William Lane, "Moses permitted divorce providing a certificate of divorce given to the wife. Its primary function was to provide protection for the woman who was rejected by her husband."

Without a certificate of divorcement, a woman could be treated like a harlot by society, and she would be left destitute.

We are told more by Jesus in ***Matthew 19:8 "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."*** NKJV

Jesus taught what the Lord said in the beginning of creation that marriage was created for a purpose.

The Pharisees were trying to redefine marriage, looking for a **loophole** out of it, while trying to trap Jesus with His answer.

The Lord is the One who created humans and He also invented marriage; so, it is He who gets to define what marriage really is.

Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

The woman was made "***comparable***" for the man, not inferior to the man.

Men and women are equal because they were both created in the image and likeness of God.

David Guzik said, *“Marriage is like a mirror; it reflects what we put into it.”*

Jesus answering the religious leaders points to ***Genesis 2:24***
Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Barclay said, *“The idea that they **shall become one flesh** includes the sexual union, but also goes far beyond it.*

“Marriage is given, not that two people should do one thing together, but that they should do all things together.”

John Trapp said ***shall become one flesh*** meant *“Be glued to her”*

Jesus is teaching that creation is the basis for relationship; it was not good that man was alone without a ***“comparable”*** helpmate.

Marriage has its origins from the Lord Himself, from the beginning of creation.

Chip Ingram said, *“Both Adam and Eve were emotionally and psychologically naked, vulnerable and open to one another.*

*“Adam and Eve had **oneness**, which is true intimacy -- emotionally, physically, and spiritually.”*

We must leave our pasts behind and be united to one another.

In marriage, there is no longer *“he”* and *“she”*; it is now *“we.”*

Marriage is the blending together of all aspects of life: physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

IV. Remarriage.

Read *Mark 10:10-12*

While trying to ascertain what a certain passage of scripture is communicating, we need to use the full counsel of God's Word, in order to determine what the passage means.

Marriage is a promise made from the spouses, to God, to the other spouse, and the world, as a binding promise.

There are certain cases where God allows the promise to be dissolved, even though He hates divorce.

Jesus was confirming that adultery is a reason for divorce; but again, it is not a mandate to divorce.

The Greek word for *sexual immorality* is the Greek word *porneia*, which includes a wide variety of sexual sins.

There are two very clear reasons for divorce within scripture and many Biblical counselors see Biblical evidence of two more.

Considering all of Scripture, we can say divorce is permitted, but not required. Some **violations** of the marriage covenant are adultery, serious neglect, abandonment and abuse.

Jesus mentioned adultery in the passage we read here in *Mark*.

Paul spoke about abandonment in *1 Corinthians 7*.

NLT 1 Corinthians 7:15, “if the husband or wife who isn't a Christian insists on leaving, let them go. In such cases the Christian husband or wife is not required to stay with them.”

Joshua Sharp said, *“In Jesus’ day, there was a fierce debate between two schools of thought within Judaism about divorce.*

However, both affirmed that a woman being neglected or abused by her husband had the right to receive a divorce.”

Again, in Jewish culture in Jesus’ time, women could not initiate divorce and had virtually no legal recourse to protect themselves from being divorced.

Paul parallels *Exodus 21* with his writings in *1 Corinthians 7*.

1 Corinthians says that spouses are not to deny each other’s physical needs (*7:2-5*); they are not to abandon or **neglect** each other (*7:10-16*); and they are to provide for each other (*7:32-35*)

Divorce is always tragic, and it is never God’s idea; but sometimes divorce is Biblically justified.

Domestic abuse is an abomination in the eyes of God, and Christians ought to be at the forefront of the battle against it.

This teaching of Jesus is a hard saying that shows us marriage, is a promise and a binding promise, known as a covenant...

Because love is not a feeling; love is a commitment.

The person who truly loves, does so because of a **decision** to love; because they have made a commitment to love whether or not the loving feeling, is present.

Just like last week when I spoke on forgiveness, I am not trying to make light of the abuses a lot of people have been through.

I am by no means saying there are never situations that warrant a separation or even a divorce, because sometimes there are.

But God's design for marriage is a life-long commitment of unconditional love toward another imperfect person.

Marriage is supposed to be, one man, one woman, together, forever, it is a lifetime of hard work.

Our flesh constantly wants its own way; but marriage is about putting others ahead of ourselves.

In **1519**, Captain Hernán Cortés landed in Veracruz Mexico to begin his great conquest.

Upon arriving, he gave the order to his men to burn the ships and said, "*You will either win the war against the Aztecs or swim back to Spain.*" So his men were left without a choice.

Marriage is not a 50/50 contract, it needs 100% and 100%.

When things get hard in a marriage, there shouldn't be "Plan B".

God designed marriage that way; couples are to burn their ships in a way and have no plan "B" if the marriage doesn't work out.

If you go into a marriage thinking you can always get a divorce, you are wrong from the beginning.

Marriage is very rewarding on some levels, but it is also hard work. Marriage is not for the faint of heart. Some think marriage makes things easier, when marriage makes things tough.

Marriage is two self-centered people, having to consider each other's needs as more important than their own, while constantly working out differences within the relationship.

V. Practical Application.

Jesus was teaching on God's perfect plan for marriage; but we are all imperfect people in need of God's forgiveness.

Even though the Lord hates divorce; we all realize, divorces happen within Christian and non-Christian marriages, alike.

My parents divorced when I was nine, so I understand the issues involved when a marriage does not work out.

Focus on the Family wrote on six stages of Divorce recovery.

Denial. Pretending the divorce never happened or downplaying its importance. "Denial" is like physical shock after an accident: the body shuts down until it can better deal with the pain.

At this stage, you may need counseling to move on.

Anger. Perceived or real injustice about the divorce; can either be a controlled burn or out-of-control rage. Once you're past the initial pain, being angry is normal.

Anger maybe justified (was the ex-spouse abusive or cheating). But that doesn't mean, however, that it's any less destructive.

Bargaining. Desperately trying anything to gain back the spouse (jealousy, a makeover, promises to never do something again, a vacation together, etc.).

At this stage, you might benefit from a support group. People who have "been there, done that" can help you in a supportive way that it's probably too late for quick fixes.

They'll help you realize that bargaining will likely set you up for a fall when reconciliation doesn't work out.

Depression. An empty emotional tank: Depression commonly displays itself in physical ways (sleep disturbances, changed eating patterns, irritability, exhaustion, etc.).

Again, it's a normal part of divorce to grieve the loss of your marriage. At this stage, you might want to find an accountability partner — of the same gender — who will listen.

You're looking for someone who'll encourage, and be there for you; either a friend of the same gender or a support group.

Acceptance. Recognizing the past is past; it's time to live in the present, and perhaps get ready to step forward into the future.

A support group might help if you feel stuck in a previous stage and can't accept what's happened.

Forgiveness. Releasing animosity toward the ex-spouse and establishing new relationships with healthy patterns and effective boundaries.

People who have "*been there*" can help you make sure the new relationship with your ex-spouse is a healthy one, grounded in the present as well as helping with feelings of emptiness.

God created marriage for many reasons including meeting each other's emotional needs; *Ephesians* tells us He created marriage to demonstrate mutual submission to each other and Christ.

The husband is to love his wife like Christ loved the Church, **sacrificially**; and the wife should respect her godly husband.

When both partners in a biblical marriage, even attempt to meet each other's needs, the marriage has an opportunity to flourish; because Agape love is not based on feelings – it is a choice.

Finally, if you have been through a divorce, this is not a time to concentrate on sin; rather it is a good time to seek the Lord.

Like someone with an addiction problem, if a person concentrates on the addiction, they will not overcome their sin.

We recognize our part of the issue, seek the Lord's forgiveness, and then receive and meditate on the awesome love of the God.

Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

Philippians 3:14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. NKJV

Every Christian needs to spend time daily with the Lord in prayer and His Word, so that He will transform us into His image, and we will begin to look more and more like Christ.

As that happens, the Holy Spirit fills us with true joy, and helps us live the abundant life!