

JESUS AND DIVORCE

MARK 10:1-12

To introduce the teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord on the permanence of marriage, let's open to John 8 -- the woman in adultery. Sounds strange doesn't it? But it's the key that unlocks some of the mystery of our text in Mark 10. You see, in the life of Christ, John 8 happens just before Mark 10 if you look at Christ's life in chronological order.

ACT #1

John 8:1-11

NOTE: v. 1-4 accused women cast before Christ
v. 5 penalty adultery (Lev. 20:10) stone both
Christ reminds them of their sin
Christ forgives her
Christ calls adultery/her sinner

ACT #2

Mark 10:1-12

Here they come! What did Jesus teach on divorce? Which view do you have they asked. He let that "sinner" off down in Jerusalem...let's trap Him.

Point One: the confusion of the day-

A. There were two schools of thought

The Pharisees' View of Divorce

Divorce was a volatile issue among the Jews. The Old Testament standard had been lowered to make divorce easy; so the practice became very, very common. The Pharisees were leaders in this, not only by what they taught, but by their example. They were continually divorcing their wives and teaching that it could be done for any reason at all. In fact, this doctrine was very popular among the people as well, especially among those who wanted to get a divorce. Actually, it merely accommodated the sinners at the level of their sin.

Now, there had been a reigning rabbinical feud between Rabbi Shammai, who said that there was to be no divorce, and Rabbi Hillel, who said that you could divorce your wife for any reason at all. Rabbi Shammai didn't have a great following because his view wasn't popular with the people. But Rabbi Hillel, who had died just twenty years before Christ's ministry, still had the dominant, popular view. He taught that you could divorce your wife for burning the dinner, for putting too much salt on your food, for spinning

around in the street so that someone saw her knees, for taking her hair down, for speaking to men, or for saying something unkind about her mother-in-law. You could even divorce her if you found someone prettier, because then she became unclean in your sight. You could divorce her if she was infertile or if she didn't give you a male child. In other words, you could divorce your wife for any reason at all. This was the popular view...and the view the Pharisees taught.

So, two views.

B. V. 3-5 Also, there were wrong interpretations of scripture. Look at Deut. 24:

- divorce is not instituted here
- divorce is not commanded here
- only remarriage is limited!

Divorce was going on and this was a two part regulation:

- (1) Men who divorced women (women could not in this era). Gave an official bill of divorcement.
- (2) Once released and wed, not divorce and go back!

So, what was the answer? The question was: "what are the legal grounds for divorce". The answer was: none. You see, Moses didn't give adultery because that was punishable by death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22; Jn. 8:1-11).

So God was not approving divorce in Deut. 24 -- He was retraining it!

You say, oh no! But what about....?

Wait, keep reading.

V. 5-9 Jesus give four reasons divorce is wrong.

V. 6 (quotes Gen. 1:27) God made one man for one woman. Note that they are not the same, they are different. Man and woman complement; they complete; but they are not synonymous. So, Jesus said divorce is wrong because God made one man for one woman.

V. 7 (Point #2) quotes Gen. 2:24, God made one goal or pursuit for both. They were to leave former view of family and pursue a new life.

So Jesus Christ said divorce is wrong because God said you cleave until you've owed to O/A!! It's so beautiful the way God planned it, listened to two Hebrew ideas.

The Hebrew Idea of Cleaving

The word “*cleave*” basically means “to have a bond that can’t be broken.” It carries with it the idea of being glued or stuck. In fact, one Bible translation that I read translates Gen. 2:24 to say that a man should be glued to his wife.

Also inherent in the word “*cleave*” is the idea of pursuing hard after something. So the idea of cleaving, then, is two people stuck together because they pursue hard after each other -- two hearts diligently and utterly committed to pursuing one another in love, stuck together in an indissolvable bond, and glued in mind, will, spirit, and emotion.

The Hebrew Word of Marriage

There is a beautiful remnant of the divine intention of marriage that finds itself in the Jewish language. The Hebrew word for marriage is *kiddushin*. Basically, *kiddushin* means “consecration” or “sanctification.” To consecrate or sanctify something means “to set something apart to God.” So, when a Jew said something was *kiddushin*, he meant that it had become the personal possession of God--totally surrendered to God. The same word is their word for marriage.

Marriage, then, is a consecration of two people to each other. It is a consecration that says, “I am totally separated unto you.” It is a union of two people whose utter devotion is to each other. In fact, according to 1 Cor. 7:2-4, a husband and wife actually become the personal possession of one another.

Also inherent in the word *kiddushin* is the idea that not only is marriage a setting apart and a consecration to each other, it’s a setting apart and consecration of that union to God. That’s the purest perspective of marriage.

1990 Census

Listen, it’s not working! Here are the figures!

Traditional families	55.2% =	50.6 million
Single moms	11.6% =	10.672 million
Single dads	3.4% =	3.128 million
Single adult (alone)	24.6% =	23 million
unwed/gay/etc. roommates	<u>5.3%</u> =	<u>4.876 million</u>
USA has	100% =	91.9 million families

Of these today in our America, there are:

10,672,000 single moms
3,128,000 single dads
50,600,000 married couples
1,175,000 couples who will split in 1992!

That's 22,600 families each week!

Let's think of Rhode Island:

42,688 single moms
12,512 single dads
19,504 unweds/gays/lesbians
202,400 traditional families

4,700 of which will divorce in 1992. It's staggering!

What's worse: It is 20 times Italy's rate; 4 times Japan's; 3 times France/Germany's; 2 times the United Kingdom, Canada and Sweden's. We are sinking!

Jesus said:

- (1) Gen. 1:27 One man for one woman
- (2) Gen. 2:24 Two glued/consecrated to O/A
- (3) Mark 10:8 Point #3: $1 + 1 = 1$
One new identity, no longer two separate lives, one new life in harmony, abandoning selfishness and pursuing unity...in mind, emotion, spirit, will and direction.

That's why the best symbol of that union is the child they produce: it is part of both, but totally new.

* You can't break two people up in a marriage -- divorce only can slice up one united person into two halves -- and two halves are no body! But, there's a final reason why divorce is so wrong! V. 9.

- (4) Mark 10:9 Divorce is wrong because marriage is made/joined by God. Marriage is a work of God.

Read it. God joins them.

Do you know why the:

- 1,175,000 divorces are so wrong? Because God joined them, and they broke that covenant and union.

- Do you know why the nearly 20,000 couples living in Rhode Island in trial, unmarried cohabitation relationships are so wrong because each day they pretend they are married they are an affront to God. Just like the gross perversions of lesbian couples and Sodomite men with men couples.

God makes marriage unions and any perversion: divorce, sodomy or “living together” is an affront to the awesome, holy and true God of the universe.

So, they asked what’s your view of divorce Jesus? His answer was God created marriage, not divorce!

Let’s close with v. 10-12. Whew! The disciples couldn’t wait to get alone. This was revolutionary: no divorce on demand!!!

You see, they heard Him!

So, the Pharisees came to Jesus and asked, “*Is it lawful for a man to put away [or ‘divorce’] his wife for every cause?*” (Mt. 19:3b). Jesus answered them by saying, “Listen to what God said. He said, ‘Marriage is one man for one woman, it is a strong bond, it is one flesh, and I am the One that makes marriages. So if you tear them apart, you’re destroying what I made and placing yourself into a very, very serious position.’”

If you ever decide to go out and fool around with somebody else’s husband or wife, just remember this: If you break up a marriage, you break up something created by God. And don’t come up with any nonsense about the Lord leading you. I just hate it when I hear people say, “The Lord led us out of our marriages and brought us together.” The Lord doesn’t do that. They are in direct violation of what the Lord created.

What Jesus is doing, then, is taking the Pharisees all the way back to the beginning to see what God had to say on the subject of divorce. And instead of losing credibility with the people, as the Pharisees had hoped, He gains it, doesn’t He? He simply reiterates what God said in Genesis, and makes the Pharisees look stupid by saying, “Haven’t you read this?”

I said the same thing to you: Before you ever think about divorce, or if you’re even now trying to decide whether divorce is right or wrong...have you read this? I think the Word of God is very clear on this issue.

So what did Jesus teach?

- Divorce was not God’s plan.
- Divorce is because of sinful, hard hearts.
- When it occurs (except for adultery, Mt. 19:3) it causes further sin.

But, you ask -- isn’t there more? Yes, but the rest of the picture is tonight: “Peter, Paul and Marriage” to answer:

- (1) What if I was divorced before I was saved?
- (2) What if my unsaved partner leaves?
- (3) What if we divorced as Christians?

That's all tonight