

Sunday, September 11, 2016  
Pastor Don Denyes

## **Introduction to Mark 10:1-12**

Most people in our culture today simply want to live however they want without any consequences for their actions. This idea is reinforced by repeated attempts to dismiss any kind of authority—especially in the realm of marriage and sexuality. While the controversy of our day is different than the controversies of Jesus' day, passages like Mark 10 remind us that God's word speaks to every situation and that He ultimately does govern how we should live, whether we acknowledge it or not.

Jesus not only reminds us of the sovereignty of God and how He rules over us by His word, but Jesus demonstrates the very principle as He continues His journey towards Jerusalem. It was the will of God for Jesus to die, and while it was a horrid thought, Jesus proceeded accordingly, because He was more concerned with the glory of God demonstrated through His obedience, than He was about His own personal freedom and comfort.

### **Context**

Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem. Peter's declaration marks the great theological turning point in Mark's Gospel (8:29), but the geographical turning point is actually the Transfiguration, which most likely took place on Mount Hermon. Since Jesus was revealed in glory to the few disciples, He has been on a steady mission to reach Jerusalem, where certain death awaits Him...

### **Structure**

- I. Jesus Stops on His Way to Jerusalem (1)
- II. Jesus Is Confronted by the Pharisees (2-4)
- III. Jesus Teaches Pharisees about Marriage/Divorce (6-9)
- IV. Jesus Teaches His Disciples (10-12)

**Read and Reflect** *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Mark 10:1-12

Embroided: Controversy of the Day

- 2 Diabolical Test
- 3 Back to the Scriptures
- 4 Mishandle the Scriptures

Explains: Counsel of God's Word

- 5 Hardness
- 6-9 Back to Creation: Genesis 1-2

God Established Marriage to Have:

- 6 Diversity
- 7-8 Unity
- 9 Longevity

Can I do whatever I want?

**\*Life, designed by our Creator, is fully enjoyed only by embracing His instructions!**

## Discuss

- 1) The Pharisees made a conscious choice to misrepresent the Scriptures in order to indulge their own sinful attitudes about marriage and divorce. What are some ways that people twist the Scriptures today?
  
- 2) Pastor Don said, “for every issue of life, God speaks clearly.” Because that is true, we ought to read His word as often as we can. What are your habits of taking in the Bible? (“taking in” = reading, listening, memorization, etc.)
  
- 3) Read Malachi 2:13-16. Based on this passage, why is the issue of marriage and divorce so important to God? How does the fact that God has ordained the institution of marriage change the way you think about either your own marriage or marriage in general?
  
- 4) Imagine a friend is thinking about divorcing his wife. How would you counsel that person? What questions would you want to ask of them? What would you want to know more about? And how would you apply the gospel to their situation?
  
- 5) Hardness of heart is a disease which infects many relationships, but perhaps marriage most intensely. How can you guard yourself against having a hard heart towards those with whom you are closest? If you feel like you have been hard-hearted towards a friend, how can you pursue reconciliation with that person?

**Go Deeper** (*This section is especially for leaders to consider as they prepare for the Growth Group meeting*)

Gospel Connections: Because marriage is ordained by God, it is a gospel issue. The gospel is ultimately about relating rightly to God. Too often, as evangelicals, our attitudes toward marriage and divorce have been inconsistent or even harmful to those who have actually experienced the latter. Jesus' teaching here reminds us that marriage is more sacred than any of us imagine, that divorce is even worse of a corruption than we imagine, but at the same time, God loves us despite our shortcomings... more than we can imagine. This passage should encourage us to be faithful in marriage because it is a gift and ordinance of God. It should also remind us of the grace of Christ who died for us even while we twist the Scriptures, exhibit careless attitudes towards our spouses, and look down on those who have experienced divorce. Instead, we should be grateful for the gift that it is and encourage those who have experienced divorce that mercy can be found in Him.

Whole Bible Connections: As Pastor Don mentioned, the Bible's teaching on marriage begins in Genesis 2. There we see a man and a woman in marital bliss—God has provided the perfect mate for the man and the complement to him which will fulfill the image of God. Yet in the very next chapter one of the first things that suffers as a result of sin is the marriage relationship. So, when God gave the law through Moses in Deuteronomy 24, He stipulated that a certificate of divorce must be given to any woman by the man who wishes to divorce her. This was another gracious gift of God which allowed women to be free from their obligation to the husband who was disowning them. It also *allowed* for divorce in the event of sexual infidelity, but did not *command* it. That is how strongly God treats the institution of marriage.

Theological Connections: One historical theological connection is the competing rabbinic schools: Hillel and Shammai. Hillel, the more liberal; Shammai the more conservative. Jesus, in effect, is saying that neither of these schools are correct, because the law was given as a concession, not a command. God hates divorce—plain and simple, and His provision for it is only for the good of His people, those who are weak and disenfranchised.