

THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS – p. 34
“What God Has Joined Together” – p. 2
Mark 10:1-12

Read Mark 10:1-12

Pray

A Trap

Last week we saw how this passage begins with the Pharisees setting a trap in an attempt to catch Jesus at something He says –

- They want to discredit Him among the people, and (most importantly to them) they want to catch Him saying something against their law that they might bring formal charges against Him.
- Going all the way back to chapter three, they want to destroy Him – they are out for blood!

So, they bring up to Jesus a question about the application of divorce law –

- Divorce has always been a controversial subject, especially among God’s people.
 - v. 2 – “... *‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?’*”
- We know in Jesus’ time, the controversy around divorce centered on the interpretation of the “indecency clause” of Deuteronomy 24:1 –
 - “When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce...”*
- There were two schools of thought on the “indecency clause” –
 - The conservative school of Rabbi Shammai = It only means sexual impurity –
 - The more progressive school of Rabbi Hillel = It means any reason at all. Any time a wife displeased or dishonored or even if she annoyed him, he could write her a divorce and put her away!

Three things we made note of at this point –

- One – According to sources, and by what is implied in this text, the predominant view and practice was the school of Rabbi Hillel – especially in Jerusalem!
 - This was how many of these Pharisees lived!
- Two – This was detrimental to women –
 - After being given in marriage and leaving the protection and provision of her father, a wife could be put out for burning dinner!
- Three – They had made this issue all about the rights of men to divorce!

But Jesus will make clear that this isn’t about men’s rights, but about their sin!

From the Beginning

In His answer, Jesus does two things –

- One – He exposes the hard hearts of the Pharisees and makes clear why they were disqualified to shepherd the people –
 - v. 5 – “... *‘Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment’...*”
 - This isn’t about men’s rights; it’s about your sin!
- Two – He uses this trap to proclaim the beauty and goodness of God’s design for marriage!
 - God made them male and female.
 - He brought them together in marriage v.7-8a – *“Therefore a man shall leave father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”*

Application

1 – We must uphold the sanctity of marriage –

- The main vibe that should be seen and sensed is that marriage is massively important –
 - That in love and by conviction, we uphold what the Bible teaches about marriage’s purpose, preciousness and prominence in human society, and what it pictures about the gospel!

- You do not need to be married to be complete, satisfied and fulfilled –
 - We can say that and, at the same time, acknowledge that the reason God made us ‘male and female’ is for the purpose of marriage.

- We must honor it, uphold it, celebrate it, teach it, defend it!
 - Pre-marriage counseling, wedding ceremonies, celebrating anniversaries -
 - Show pictures and videos of your wedding to the kids and grandkids

- And one way we honor the sanctity of marriage is to exercise great wisdom and caution in getting married –
 - Prov. 11:14 – *“Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.”*
 - Prov. 24:6 – *“...in abundance of counselors there is victory.”*
 - Use your parents, pastors, godly men and women to help you make major life-altering decisions.
 - Try “pre-engagement counseling”!

2 – We must acknowledge the exception clause of Jesus and the allowance clause of Paul –

- Church pastors and elders must help their people and churches navigate application of the Bible’s teaching on marriage and divorce.

3 – We must grow in marriage and seek help in marriage when it is needed –

- If you are married or if someday you are married, it is essential that you make growing in marriage a priority of your life!

4 – We must repent and seek to obey God if living in sin –

- One of the reasons that the divorce rate is down is that the co-habitation rate is high.
 - Hebrews 13:4 – *“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”*

- Sex is God’s gift to married couples for procreation and pleasure –
 - One of the ways we honor marriage is that we honor God’s purpose in creating sex.

6– In all cases and at all times we must look to the merciful, gracious, forgiving, and redemptive work of God through Jesus Christ –