

29- The Question of Divorce

Mark 10:1-12

Mark 10:1-12 *And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judaea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again. 2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. 3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. 11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.*

Probably one of the thorniest issues that have faced the church down through time is the subject of marriage, divorce, remarriage. Many look down on a fellow believer that has been divorced as a second class spiritual Christian. Some even hold a holier than thou attitude about those who are widowed and then marry again.

I want to begin this by saying that I am against divorce with all the fiber of my being. We must face the fact that divorce is, has always been and will always be a fact of life. We must learn to deal with it redemptive and not destructively.

I- Man and Woman:

To begin to understand this issue we must return to the beginning of the history of mankind. **Mark 10:6** *...from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.* We read in **Genesis 1:27** *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

With the creation of the man and woman, we know them as Adam and Eve, God gave us the first institution known to man, the family.

Mark 10:7 *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.* This is foundational on **Genesis 2:24** *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

The home was established for a multitude of benefits. The raising of children, the protection of the home, the emotional support of both the male and female, the picture of Christ and the church yet to come among others. We also see that God intended it to be male and female, and one man and one woman to be in God's plan.

Mark 10:9 *What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.* Guzik says, "In using the terms joined together and separate, Jesus reminds us that divorce is really like an amputation. Sometimes, in the most extreme circumstances, amputation may be the right thing to do. But the "patient" must first fit the criteria before God will recognize the "amputation.""

Also I submit to you that God never intended, what we creep into the genealogy of the Bible starting with Lamech in **Genesis 4:19** *And Lamech took unto him two wives...* I have always felt this was outside of God's will and was because of the lust of men.

II- The Question of Divorce:

Mark 10:1 *And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judaea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.*

Jesus is beginning the journey south that will end up in Jerusalem. **Luke 17:11** says *And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.*

Robertson's *Word Pictures* says the following to set the stage between Mark 9 and Mark 10.

A great deal has intervened between the events at the close of Mark 9 and those in the beginning of Mark 10. For these events See Matthew 18; John 7-11; Luke 9:57-18:14 (one-third of Luke's Gospel comes in here). It was a little over six months to the end at the close of Mark 9. It is just a few weeks now in Mark 10. Jesus has begun his last journey to Jerusalem going north through Samaria, Galilee, across the Jordan into Perea, and back into Judea near Jericho to go up with the passover pilgrims from Galilee.

Mark 10:2 *And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.* These Pharisee were not really interested in the teaching of Jesus. They were trying to trap Him. They were probably well aware of the teaching Jesus had already done on this. After all this was not the first time that Jesus had spoken on the subject of marriage and divorce. Earlier during the sermon on the mount in **Matthew 5:31-32** He said, *It hath been said, Whosoever*

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Jesus answered the question with a question; an often used tactic of the Master. **Mark 10: 3** And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? What did Moses say? He took them back to the time of Moses and the teaching before.

Their response is found in **Mark 10:4** And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. We see that indeed that that was the teaching of Moses found in **Deuteronomy 24:1-3** When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. 3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife.

This was not a command but was allowed. It should never be seen as Moses instituting nor endorsing divorce. Jesus explains why that it was even allowed was not because it was God's will but because of the flaws of men.

Mark 10:5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. This phrase hardness of your heart is only one word in the originally language of the Bible, Greek. Strong's says it means, "hard heartedness, that is, (specifically) destitution of (spiritual) perception."

So why was the divorce papers draw up. One thought is that men were simply putting their wives out without divorcing her and thereby making it impossible for her, still a married woman, to find someone to take care of her. The precept of Moses was one not necessarily to give consent to the practice but to govern the practice already being practiced.

Matthew 19:3 gives us more insight into this subject. **Matthew 19:3** The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? They asked for every cause; for a whim, because she burnt the toast.

III- The Disciples Question:

As often happened with the disciples they had questions and when they were in private asked the Master. **Mark 10:10** And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. 11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

The foundation of this teaching is also found in the time of Moses. **Deuteronomy 24:4** Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

Does this mean that anyone who has divorced and then remarried is living in adultery. A lot of scholars believe that is exactly what is being taught while other think it means they commit adultery but are not living in it continually.

I want us to notice two more things before we finish. First, in the fuller account of the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew we see an important and often overlooked item. **Matthew 19:9** And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Did you see this? Jesus said there was one ground for divorce and that was a spouse being unfaithful to the marriage vow. Remember again the words of **Deuteronomy 24:1** When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her...

So this seems to certainly allow, not encourage nor make it a necessity, divorce. This also allows a spouse of someone who has been unfaithful to remarry without fear of being in adultery. I have often wondered what God thinks about our attitudes many times when we hold people to a higher standard than He does.

On last verse that need to be considered for a moment. Paul teaches us in the letter to the church at Corinth about a marriage that is dissolved because of abandonment. **1 Corinthians 7:15** But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. The teaching in this fuller context is that the burden is on the believer to not be the one who abandons the marriage but it the unbeliever leaves then they are free.

Does this settle this topic? I wish it were that simple. My prayer is that never, never will anyone have to go through a divorce. However, I want to help us to not treat people who have like second class saints unfit to be around. Hopefully as we have explored this we have gained new insight into the subject from the teaching of the Bible and not just from the traditions of men.