

“Jesus on Marriage and Divorce”
August 24, 2014

Mark 10:1-12

- Pharisees wanted to “test Jesus/trap Him in His words.” They chose the controversy RE: the issue of divorce.
- Jesus amazingly avoided their trap—rather than an endless debate on divorce—He expressed the heart of God for marriage.

1. The HEART of the DEBATE

- Deuteronomy 24:1- “something indecent”
 - Rabbi Hillel school- *anything that displeased the husband—from her cooking to finding someone more desirable*
 - Rabbi Shammai school- *marital unfaithfulness*
- Additional issues:
 - Divorce had become a permissible way for marriage to be terminated so that the husband/wife could remarry.
 - Husbands were using Moses’ “permission for divorce” as a way to avoid returning their wives’ dowry (\$\$ or property) or paying them any support following the divorce

2. JESUS’ RESPONSE to the DIVORCE QUESTION

- He looked past the permission (Deuteronomy 24:1-4) to God’s original command (Genesis 1-2)
- *NOTE: “Command” is a word expressing, “join Me in My lifestyle of commitment.” (Pharisees focused on concession, not command)*
- Moses’ “permission” for divorce was:
 - Designed to help the victims of divorce (*only men could file*)
 - Also designed to make the husband **think** twice before terminating his marriage (*“Certificate”—more than flippant*)
 - Gave wife the legal right to remarry & reclaim her dowry
 - “Hardness of heart”—*stubborn; stiff-necked—unwilling to turn and see from another perspective*

3. JESUS’ HEART for MARRIAGE

- 4 powerful word pictures:
 - “Be joined”- covenant—not convenience
 - “Become one flesh”- *intimate, inseparable closeness*
 - “No longer two, but one”
 - “What God has joined together”

- Marriage is about...
 - Receiving someone, not rejecting them
 - Laying down your life for another person
 - Covenant—not a contract
 - NOTE: “Marital unfaithfulness” breaks the bond of trust—the foundation of all relationships
- Jesus’ emphasis here is pro-marriage (*not simply anti-divorce*)
 - At that time—a lowered view of marriage
 - Matthew 19:10- Disciples: “*The standard is too high! Better not to marry?*”
 - (Mark 10:11-12) Strong words! Jesus is addressing the flippant tossing aside of marriage simply to take up with another person.
 - He is not condemning divorced people—He is lifting marriage to an honored place.

CLOSING THOUGHTS:

1. Life can be “messy.” People make choices. (*i.e., 1 Cor. 7:15- “If the unbeliever leaves (the marriage)—you are no longer bound to the other.”*)
2. Jesus did not revoke Deuteronomy 24:1 permission to divorce...
3. ...but He did reinforce Genesis 1 & 2—God’s intent for marriage to be an inseparable covenant uniting a man & a woman.
4. There have been misapplication of these verses:
 - a. “Abusing” victims of abuse-
 - i. “Always go back” (submission at any price)
 - ii. “It must be your fault!”
 - iii. NOTE: Without intervention—the “abuse cycle” will not simply stop.
 - b. Condemning those who have walked through the pain of divorce
 - i. Divorce is not God’s ultimate desire for His people
 - ii. But, due to “hardness of heart” and “unfaithfulness”—it is permitted
 - iii. Jesus did not elaborate on “permissible” reasons for divorce—but His high view of marriage requires that divorce be a last resort.