

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 31ST, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

TESTING HIM (MARK 10:1-2) PLOTING TO KILL JESUS (MARK 3:6)

Jesus left Capernaum for Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). As He crossed the eastern side of the Jordan, He was in **the place where John the Baptist was beheaded for rebuking Herod Antipas's adulterous marriage** to his brother's wife Herodias.

- The Pharisees **hoped Jesus would suffer the same fate** by condemning Herod Antipas's marriage to Herodias in His answer.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER

The point behind the Pharisees' question is clearer in Matthew 19:3, where they ask, **"Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife on any grounds?"**

- There were two schools of thought around the topic of divorce, and **the Pharisees at least wanted Jesus to pick a side and divide His followers.**

TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

The differing schools of thought were led by Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai and divided the Jews on their interpretation of the portion of Mosaic Law that permitted divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1.

- The debate centered around each rabbi's belief about **what was displeasing and indecent enough to warrant divorce.**
- Deuteronomy 24:1

HARDENED HEARTS (MARK 10:3-9) "WHAT DID MOSES COMMAND YOU?"

Nowhere in the law did Moses command divorce; he said that **"he may"** divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1). Divorce was permitted but never commanded.

- Jesus opposed Hillel's view that a man could divorce simply because his wife displeased him and Shammai's view that divorce is preferable in specific cases—**though divorce is permitted it may not always be profitable.**

HARDNESS OF HEARTS

Jesus said divorce was given as a concession **"because of the hardness of your hearts."**

- Divorce was permitted because of the hardness of **the offending party's heart**, which made it possible for the offense to take place, as well as **the offended party's heart**, which made them unable to perfectly forgive and restore a damaged relationship.

MARRIAGE INSTITUTED AND DIVORCE ALLOWED

Jesus reminded His listeners that marriage and divorce did not come into existence with Moses and the law.

- **Marriage was instituted at creation and should not be entered into lightly or dissolved for trivial reasons.** Divorces were already taking place, and **the law was given to protect women** from being divorced by their husbands for no reason.

MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Jesus knew their misunderstanding of divorce stemmed from not understanding marriage.

- Verses 6-9 show God's design for marriage (male and female) and unity within a marriage (one flesh). **God is 100% pro-marriage and 100% anti-divorce.** Though divorce is permitted and goes against God's design, we must also **remember that God is full of grace.**

THE SERIOUSNESS OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

God's Word pertaining to marriage used terms like **"joined together"** and **"separate."**

- Jesus is reminding us that **divorce is like an amputation.** Sometimes, in extreme circumstances, when there is a diagnosis that warrants an extreme solution, amputation is the right call to preserve the body and may be the right thing to do.

COMMITTING ADULTERY (MARK 10:10-12) CONTEXT MATTERS

The teaching here in Mark on marriage and divorce is not exhaustive and we should not read it as such.

- We must always **consider the whole counsel of God**, because misunderstandings that lead to harm are more likely to happen when we isolate verses and take them out of context.

"THE DISCIPLES QUESTIONED HIM"

Jesus' disciples were asking questions about the topic of divorce and Jesus responded to them by saying, **"Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. Also, if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."**

- There are misunderstandings and misuse of these words when taken out of context.

CONTEXT GIVES CLARITY

Jesus is following up on remarks made earlier (v. 4) about divorce being permitted.

- When we look at the biblical grounds for divorce and take this verse in the context of what was previously discussed, we see that **Jesus was speaking about the instances when a person was divorced outside of biblical parameters.**

BIBLICAL GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE

Matthew 19:9 speaks about **sexual immorality** as a reason and Paul says that abandonment by an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:15) is also a reason. **Abuse** is often added as grounds for divorce.

- **We do not look for reasons for divorce but for opportunities for confession, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration.** However, as a last resort, separation or divorce is permitted.

NO CONDEMNATION IN CHRIST (ROMANS 8:1)

God is capable of changing and reforming any person. He is **quick to extend grace** to even those who were divorced outside of biblical parameters, even if remarried.

- Grace covers our transgressions, but **we must be careful not to willfully sin once we are no longer ignorant of the truth.** Freedom in Christ does not free us up to continue in sin.

CHILDLIKE FAITH (MARK 10:13-16) "THE DISCIPLES REBUKED THEM"

This section begins with people bringing their children, probably ranging from infants to pre-teens, **"in order that He might touch them."** It was common for rabbis to lay hands on and bless little children.

- Tension was growing as they made their way to Jerusalem, and **Jesus was indignant that His disciples tried to stop this from happening.**

CREATING PATHS, NOT BLOCKING THEM

The disciples viewed their time and Jesus' as more important than the families trying to bring their children to Jesus.

- Jesus often uses children as an example of those seeking and curious about Him. Jesus' anger towards His disciples was **because they not only failed to provide a way to Him but actually blocked the way.**

A PICTURE OF HOW WE COME TO THE FATHER

Jesus says that only those who **receive the Kingdom like little children will enter it.**

- To have child-like faith means we have **total dependence on and trust in our Father.** A little child cannot provide for themself. They **depend on their parents for everything** and **trust that they are loved and cared for.**

CHILDLIKE FAITH, NOT CHILDISH FAITH

Jesus' point was to get us to look at how a child receives gifts. They receive gifts with **anticipation, excitement, and gratitude, without believing they did anything to deserve them.**

- Jesus does not mince words when telling us that those who do not receive the Kingdom this way will not enter it. However, v. 16 shows that **all who come to Jesus will be welcomed.**

MARRIAGE

- What is our approach to marriage, whether married or single?
- Are we honoring God's original design? Marriage is to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church.
- Are we receiving grace when we have gotten it wrong and extending grace when others have gotten it wrong?

HARDNESS OF YOUR HEARTS

- Have I displayed a hardness of the heart in my relationships?
- Am I willing to invite God to give me a heart of flesh and transform my heart of stone (Ezekiel 36:26)?
- Am I practicing forgiveness, walking in humility, and experiencing reconciliation?

LITTLE CHILDREN

- Is our view of others more like Jesus' view or the disciples'? Do we see others as being worth our time and investment, or is our time more important than them?
- Am I refusing the gifts of God out of self-sufficient pride?
- A recipient of the Kingdom will be marked by **trust, humility, and dependence.**