

**March 3, 2019 – Elmont Baptist Church**  
**Message Series: The Gospel of Mark**  
**Week 36: “From the Beginning of Creation”**  
**Text: Mark 10:1-12**

We’re unpacking and understanding the Book of Mark. We’ve stepped away from this Book for a few months and we come back to it today. We’ve moved just past the halfway point where everything led up to the moment where the disciples answer this all-important question of “who is Jesus?” The second half of Mark that really begins in chapter 8 verse 31 which is all about answering the question “what did Jesus come to do?”, and a third question comes out of that, which is, “what does Jesus expect of you?”

Reminder: Mark’s audience is Romans believers, and as theologian Danny Akin says, “he is telling them that Jesus is the Messiah King and suffering servant who actively ministers on our behalf and gives his life as a ransom for many.” That point is essential to remember and use as a lens through which we read and study this book. Mark, the writer of this book, is saying that if Jesus is the servant King who came “not to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many”, then do we think He will call us to anything less.

The texts that we’re dealing with the next three weeks involve Jesus teaching through interactions that He has about how self-sacrifice, dying to self, is really the key to enjoying Him and loving people.

Today we look at a passage where the religious leaders, called Pharisees, ask Jesus a loaded question. They don’t really care how He answers because they think they have Him cornered and they don’t really want to know the Truth. They want to keep going in their selfish sinfulness. Their question tells so much about their heart, and often ours do as well.

Let’s READ our TEXT

So the religious leaders ask Jesus about divorce. They felt like however Jesus answered He was going to offend someone and might offend them enough to lead to His death or at least imprisonment. Again, their question reveals so much about their heart. We too often ask questions that seek to justify our selfish desires. Ones like “Is it a sin to \_\_\_\_\_?” or “Does the Bible say that \_\_\_\_\_ is a sin?” and “Doesn’t God want me to be happy?” I remember reading a book by Andy Stanley almost 20 yrs ago that dealt with this. He, and I’m sure others, said that we’re asking the wrong question when we ask things like that. It’s like we’re asking “How close can I get to sin and still not technically sin?” His counsel was that rather than asking if there is anything wrong with this or that, we should be asking “Is this the wise thing for me to do?” So rather than asking how close to sin can we get, we should be asking what are things we need to be doing in order to get closer to Jesus. Other questions that would help us move in the right direction would be: “Will this person, thing, or activity draw me closer to Jesus?” “Does this glorify God?” and “What does God want in this?”

We cannot ignore the Scriptures on this issue today and we desperately need to truly deal with the Sacred Text and see ourselves and marriage as God does and learn to ask the right questions that help us run to Jesus in response to difficult circumstances. Because what I’m still learning (and honestly don’t really like) is that that difficult circumstances often reveal defiant areas of my heart.

## **Jesus’ Words Tell Us...**

### ✓ **God’s Intention in Marriage Will Never Change – v 6, 9**

- One man & one woman for a lifetime
- Because your marriage is bigger than you

Author Daniel Akin says it this way, “One man joined to one woman for a lifetime is God’s perfect will for every marriage.” Divorce, even among God’s people Israel, had become very common-place. Women had little to no value in the eyes of the culture, and they took a command of Moses in Deuteronomy that was meant to protect women and limit, regulate, and report divorce, and used it as a loophole for men to divorce their wives for just about any reason.

Jesus takes this opportunity to teach about God’s desire in marriage, and to do so, He doesn’t deal with the sinful present, but goes back to God’s original plan before sin even entered into humanity, and the reality that sin and man’s interpretation do not change God’s intention.

Why is marriage such a big deal to God? Because, as Ephesians 5:21-33 tells us, it is God’s primary illustration of Christ’s relationship with His bride, the church. Your marriage is a living illustration of the Gospel in how you husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church, and how you wives respect the God-given headship of your husband. Your marriage is bigger than you.

✓ **Our Response to Difficulty is Often Selfish – v 5**

- We fail at forgiveness
- We prefer not to persevere

Like was said before, difficult circumstances often reveal defiant areas of our heart. The Gospel writer is addressing Roman believers – Christians living in a very pagan society. Combine that with a low view of women and you have men marrying and divorcing their wives anytime a better option arose. Just think about how we respond when circumstances don't go our way or people don't do as we wish or hope. Do we keep loving them and showing grace and sticking with them? Or decide we "just can't" right now? What is it your spouse could do or say that would undoubtedly undo your wedding vows and lead you to divorce? Does your answer reconcile with the grace you've been shown by Jesus, and the life-change Jesus brings to those that know and love Him? Has the gospel that washed ALL your sin away transformed you into a grace giver to those in deepest need of it and the ones you share a last name with? The longer we walk with Jesus, the less selfish we must be.

✓ **Our Relationships Must be in the Right Order – v 7-8**

- Pursuing Christ first will mean
- Cherishing your spouse most

Christian marriage is the ultimate self-sacrificing relationship. Everyday is an opportunity to model the love of Jesus in the life of a person who should know you best. If both husband and wife would pursue Jesus and sacrifice their needs for the needs of their spouse, then the world would be speechless in amazement. They are no longer two, but one. One is not lost into the other, but they are one together. But as we all know too well, both wife and husband pursuing Jesus first doesn't always happen and things break down. Some are in marriages with an unbelieving spouse or levels of dysfunction that make what we're talking about sound like a fantasy world. Even when both spouses are believers, there can be those times when someone's not meeting expectations and frustration and resentment set in. Some have been in that cycle for so long they don't even realize how bad it is. But we have to evaluate if we're pursuing Christ first. Men, pursuing Christ first will never look like laziness, apathy, or abuse. Ladies, pursuing Christ first will never look like nagging, manipulating, or emasculating. The marriage relationship is meant to be the closest earthly relationship you have. No other earthly relationship is to even come close. Husbands, pursue Christ most and cherish your bride. Wives, pursue Christ most and cherish your husband.

Bottom line:

We too live in a culture where divorce is common-place, and it's common-place as much in the church as anywhere else. Most likely everyone in here has either walked through divorce themselves or alongside someone that has. So here's what you need to know as we wind down: If you are or have been divorced, you are not beyond God's love, grace, and forgiveness. You might have been the one that initiated the divorce or the one that was left holding the pieces. Either way, you are not beyond the love of Jesus. You may still need to confess and repent of some things, but there is grace, mercy, restoration, and wholeness for you. If you're married, start or keep working hard by God's grace to pursue Christ first and cherish your spouse. If you're single, pursue Christ with all your might and trust Him and the work He is doing in you and in whom He has for you.

**Thinking it Through...**

- ✓ **Will you let God's Word instruct you to accept Truth and confess sin?**
- ✓ **Will you let God's grace heal you of past hurts and unforgiveness?**
- ✓ **Will you let God's Spirit empower to make things right and pursue Jesus first?**

## Storying Mark 10:1-12

Spend a little time coming up with your own Observation and Interpretation questions. Look back at past message notes for help.

### Questions

- **Observation: What does it say?**

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- **Interpretation: What does it mean?**

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- **Application: How do I respond?**

**Use the “Thinking it Through” questions as needed**

- What is the definition of marriage? What is the purpose of marriage? How does this affect our view on the legal definition of marriage?
- What is the difference between regulating and reporting divorce on the one hand, and sanctioning or affirming divorce on the other?
- How has the fall influenced God’s ideal for marriage? How does it affect the way a Christian might counsel couples?
- How would you respond to someone who says, “I’ll just get divorced and remarried, then I’ll ask God to forgive me”?
- What can the church do to help prevent divorce before it happens? What can individuals do?

“Application” questions taken directly from Danny Akin in *Christ-Centered Exposition*