

Sunday, November 20, 2011—Mark Dispensationally Considered—Mark 10:1-12: Jesus on the Law of Divorce

Introduction

- This morning we are going to be looking at what the Bible has to say about divorce. I know that any time I take up a subject like this there is the potential to make people angry. Traditionally divorce has been a lightning rod within the body of Christ. In some circles divorce is viewed almost as an unpardonable sin that excludes and disqualifies a person from Christian service.
- “For the past decade, the overall American divorce rate has remained stable, at around **50%** for first marriages. The statistics are become more depressing for each successive marriage, with **65%** of second marriages ending in divorce and even higher rates for third marriages and beyond. Divorce rate statistics show that **3.6 to 5%** of marriages are ending every year, cumulating in a large portion of adults who have personally experienced divorce at some point in their lives.” (DivorceGuide.com)
- “**Money problems** are often cited as the number one cause of divorce in America, but it's impossible to calculate because they are part of a larger cause usually called 'irreconcilable differences', which basically means that couple couldn't get along. These account for about half of all American divorces. Another key cause is **adultery**, with an estimated quarter of marriages dissolving for this reason. Surprisingly, very few people cite outright **abuse** as a cause of divorce.” (DivorceGuide.com)
- Divorce in America, the statics don't lie:
 - 11% of the adult population is divorced
 - 25% of adults have had a least one divorce in their life time
 - Divorce rates among Conservative Christians were significantly higher than other faith groups, and much higher than Atheists and Agnostics experience.

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.*
- Mark 10:1—at the end of Chapter 9 Jesus had been located in the city of Capernaum (Mark 9:33). Now as Chapter 10 opens, Jesus moves into the region of Judea on the far side of the Jordan river.
- The word “wont” is an Old English word meaning: accustomed; habituated; using or doing customarily, according to *Webster's 1828 Dictionary*.

- Mark 10:2—as Jesus enters into Judea, the Pharisees come and tempt Christ but asking him about divorce.
 - Matthew 19:3—“is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for **every cause**?”
- Mark 10:3—Jesus responds by asking them what Moses had to say about the subject in the Law.
- Mark 10:4—the Pharisees respond by saying that “Moses suffered them to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.”
- Before we look at the passage the Pharisees are quoting (Deuteronomy 24:1-4) we have to make sure we understand the Bible’s definition of divorce. Divorce by definition is the ending of a marriage. If you are going to properly understand divorce you first need to properly understand what marriage is.
- Exodus 22:16-17—the sexual relations did not marry them. Marriage is more than a physical relationship.
- John 4:16-18—this woman has had five husbands but Christ tells her that she does not currently have a husband. Simply living in a relationship of intimacy does not equal marriage.
- Malachi 2:14—fundamentally marriage is a contractual relationship for a life-long companionship. Hosea 2:19-20—betroth means to swear in oaths.
- Deuteronomy 24:1-4—divorce then is a formal legal ending of a marriage.
 - Written document, deliberate
 - Bill personally delivered
 - Sent out of the house a formal rupture of the terms of companionship
 - Deuteronomy 24:2—she is free to remarry, when she does so she is the other man’s wife.
- Mark 10:5—Jesus tells the Pharisees that it is because of the hardness of their hearts that Moses told them to write a bill of divorcement in Deuteronomy 24.
 - Matthew 19:8—divorce was not part of God’s original plan from the beginning it is a human invention. It was because of the hardness of the hearts of the people that God suffered or allowed it. All divorces are not sinful, but sin leads to divorce.
- Malachi 2:16—I would never tell you that God doesn’t hate divorce. But this verse cannot be used as a blanket statement about every divorce.
- Ezra 10:1-6, 11, 19—113 divorces occur in a time of spiritual renewal and repentance to God.
- Jeremiah 3:8—God divorced the 10 Northern Tribes of Israel because of their spiritual adultery and fornication.

- Mark 10:6-9—reviews the basic definition of marriage throughout the Bible which has not changed from the beginning regardless of the dispensation of God that is in effect. Marriage is between one man and one woman.
 - Genesis 2:24-25
 - Ephesians 5:31
- In all these passages marriage finds its strength in three fold base, similar to a tripod.
 - *Leaving*—dying to the old identify of singleness. There needs to be a formal severing of the old bonds. Many of the problems that arise in marriage are from one or both parties not formally leaving their father and mother.
 - *Cleaving*—the reason the couples leave is so that they can cleave to one another. The Greek word translated “cleave” literally means to glue upon. Have you ever put wall paper on a wall? The paper cleaves to the wall and become one with the wall. Have you ever removed wall paper? That tarring is what happens to people when they get divorced.
 - *One Flesh*—this is the result of the leaving and cleaving. This is clearly talking about the physically intimacy that is created in marriage and that scripturally is reserved only for marriage.
- Mark 10:10-12—upon entering into the house the disciples ask him again about these things. Jesus intensifies the comment of Moses by telling them that anyone who puts away his or her husband or wife and marries another person commits adultery against their first spouse.
- Matthew 5:31-32, 19:9—if you look closely there are three teachings in this passage regarding divorce.
 - *Beginning*—divorce not part of God’s plan
 - *Israel Under the Law*—God suffers it/allows it but regulates it
 - *Israel’s Kingdom Instructions*—Christ says that fornication is the only grounds for divorce.

Divorce in the Dispensation of Grace

- I Corinthians 7:10-11—there are no grounds for divorce between members of the Body of Christ.
- Ephesians 4:32—apply the grace and forgiveness that we have already been given in Jesus Christ.
 - Colossians 3:13
- If your spouse wants a divorce you cannot stop them.

- I Corinthians 7:11—if a divorce does occur both parties are to remain unmarried so as to leave open the option of reconciliation thereby being obedient to grace.
- I Corinthians 7:12-15—divorce is not required for people who are married to unbelievers. The believer is not to seek a divorce in these circumstances.
- Divorce is not the unpardonable sin. If you consider divorce a sin that very fact allows it to be forgiven.
- I Corinthians 7:27—Paul’s instructions are clear. If you are married don’t seek to be loosed. If you have been loosed from a wife seek not a wife.
 - I Corinthians 7:8
- I Corinthians 7:28—a divorced believer can marry again without the stigma of wrong doing. Person with a past once wrongs have been rectified is free to marry again.

Conclusion

- Genesis 1:14-19—God placed the planetary bodies into the second heaven to give light upon the earth but also to serve for signs and for seasons.
- Many things in our earthly existence can be compared to the passing of the seasons. Dr. Gary Chapman author of the *Five Love Languages* has also written a book entitled *The Four Seasons of Marriage*.
- Marriage relationships are constantly changing. Attitudes shift, emotions fluctuate, and the way spouses treat each other ebbs and flows between loving and not loving. Some changes are beyond our control (medical diagnosis’s). Other changes we create for ourselves, but sometimes with unexpected consequences (moving).
- In the natural world, the four seasons are created by certain inevitable changes that occur as the earth turns on its axis and revolves around the sun. Likewise, the changes we face in life (and the way we process and respond to them) create the seasons of marriage.
- The combination of our emotions, attitudes, and actions will determine which season our marriage is in at any given time. We feel emotions; develop attitudes based on those emotions which in turn spur us to action. The interweaving of our emotions, attitudes, and actions creates the quality of our relationship in the various seasons of marriage.
- It is important to realize that divorces are not contemplated and do not occur in either the Spring or Summer seasons.

Winter

<i>Emotions</i>	Hurt, anger, disappointment, loneliness, feeling rejected
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<i>Attitudes</i>	Negativity, discouragement, frustration, hopelessness
<i>Actions</i>	Destructive, speaking harshly, not speaking, violent
<i>Climate of Relationship</i>	Detached, cold, harsh, bitter. In the winter season of marriage, couples are unwilling to negotiate differences. Conversations turn to arguments, or spouses withdraw in silence. There is no sense of togetherness. The marriage is like two people living in separate igloos.

- If you are contemplating a divorce don't wait to get the church involved until you have already begun the process let the brethren get involved early.
- EMOTIONS moderated by REASON guided by TRUTH = **CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION**