

Marriage Matters - I
 God's Prescription for Marriage
 Mark 10:1-12
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¹ And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.

² And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" ³ He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" ⁴ They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." ⁵ And Jesus said to them, "*Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. ⁶ But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' ⁷ 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. ⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.*"

¹⁰ And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. ¹¹ And he said to them, "*Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, ¹² and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.*"

It is a wonderful thing to hear when someone is getting married. The preparation, the anticipation, the days leading up to marriage can be intimidating and exciting at the same time. Marriage is honorable in all. Because, God made the institution of marriage and God desires that marriage be honored.

On the other hand, the subject of divorce can be painful. Divorce frequently appears on lists of the top five hurtful life experiences, along with the death of a loved one and serious illness.

So, as we hear Jesus' teaching on divorce, I realize this subject may be a very uncomfortable for some or many. So, we'll cover this passage in stages – the topic of marriage first and then the topic divorce topic next Sunday or the following Sunday, Lord willing. This morning, we will look at God's prescription for Marriage.

Now last week we saw that Jesus taught quite forcefully about resisting sin. Today, this passage begins with Jesus traveling into the region of Judea and across the Jordan river. There again, crowds came to him. And then the Pharisees came wanted to test him or tempt him. How? With a question about divorce. So, Jesus in his response to the Pharisees talks about why God instituted marriage, its significance and its implications. Then he talks about divorce. And then Jesus privately teaches his disciples about divorce. Given our culture today, marriage has undergone all kinds changes in its definition. This

morning, I would like to focus on what Jesus teaches about biblical marriage. We'll focus on verses 6, 7 and 8.

Verse 6.

⁶ *But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.'*

Jesus tells the Pharisees about a time when there was no sin in the world. God made the first two people. And they were two distinct unique individuals. Male and female. It is so sad that in our culture today there is so much redefining identity. However, there is no assigned sex or gender at birth according to Jesus. You are born either male or female. How do we know? Today, medical technologies have helped us determine who is a male or female at a chromosomal level. XY is male. XX is female. Now, there are some who will immediately push back and say, "What about those who don't have XX or XY?" It is true there is a small percentage of people born who are not XY or XX. They have XXY, XXYY, XXX, X0 in their chromosomal markers but the first two are male and the latter two are female. So, even with the minority population you have either male or female.

So, after affirming God's design in creation, Jesus teaches about God's design for marriage. Jesus gives three divine prescriptions for marriage.

⁷ *'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh.'* So they are no longer two but one flesh.

Prescription# 1- Priority.

- Let the marriage relationship be the *priority*.
Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother..

What does Jesus mean?

Let's cover what Jesus does not mean –

1. Jesus does not mean the man or woman abandon or forsake the parents when or after getting married. Wayne Mack in his book "Strengthening Your Marriage", says leaving your parents does not necessarily mean a geographical move. It could but not necessarily.
 - a. When we expounded Mark 7:9-13, we covered this. Jesus told the Pharisees that they had a fine way to rejecting God's command and thus not honor father and mother. How? By saying "Corban" - meaning a gift to God. By designating what is to be given to care for parents but given to the temple treasury. So, leaving father and mother to get married does not mean abandoning parents.
 - b. Paul wrote to Timothy that *"But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than*

an unbeliever.” 1 Timothy 5:8

2. Jesus means that leaving parents means the marriage relationship becomes the new priority. When a couple gets married, their relationship to parents and siblings should change. Wayne Mack says the relationship with parents becomes an adult relationship.

Prescription# 2 – Permanence.

- Let the marriage relationship be *permanent*.

⁷ *‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife..*

When Jesus says, “*hold fast to his wife*”, he is talking about *permanence*. As long as you have this life, God’s prescription for marriage is for you to be faithful to the spouse until you die.

Marriage is not just a convenience but a commitment to God and to each other for life.

Marriage is just an obligation but obedience to God.

Marriage is a relationship that leads to responsibility.

God prescription for marriage involves “*cleaving to one another in sickness, health, poverty, wealth, pleasure, pain, joy, sorrow, good times, bad times, agreements and disagreements*”. Wayne Mack observes that marriage will have issues and problems and when you face those problems you don’t run from them but seek God’s help and resolve them rather than run from them.

So, first prescription is *priority*. Second is *permanence*.

Prescription# 3 – Permission.

- Marriage relationship is the only *permission* for intimacy.

⁷ *‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh.*

Marriage is a safe haven for sexual intimacy. This is what Jesus means when he says the two shall become one flesh. Divine math is inverse. One plus one is one not two.

In Hebrews chapter 13 verse 4 the author says “*Marriage must be honored among all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, for God will judge sexually immoral people and adulterers*”.

And Jesus means more than just physical intimacy. Marriage means oneness. Marriage involves emotions and relationship of mutual trust, love and care. The intimacy in marriage cannot be shared with anyone else. Marriage does not complete agreement in absolutely everything with each other. It means complementing each other not competing with each other. And that means giving compliments to each other too.

Borrowing from Mack again, he says, “*the couple should share everything—their bodies, their possessions, their insights, their ideas, their abilities, their problems, their successes, their sufferings, their failures etc*”.

Now, this is the ideal before sin came into this world. This might seem like an impossible task to do in a sin ridden world.

Adam and Eve, soon after they were placed in the happily ever after garden of Eden were prone to deception, irresponsibility and disobedience.

The first couple sinned and declared independence from God and therefore we have inherited a sin nature since then.

Therefore, the need for God is the first priority if God’s prescription for marriage is to be followed.

That is why every marriage needs Jesus Christ as the center.

Which means, the marriage must be a Gospel centered marriage. Because when the marriage is Gospel centered, Christ is at the center.

Hear the Apostle Paul on how you were brought to Christ.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. Ephesians 2:13-16

As I conclude, has the gospel has taken root in your heart?

Have you grasped the nature of God’s mercy to you?

Have you taken your sins and confessed them to God?

Do you enter marriage and continue in marriage as a forgiven sinner?

When Christ is at the center of marriage, and the Holy Spirit is leading your marriage, you can expect the fruit of the Holy Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

May the Lord grant us strength to keep marriage honorable!

----- Discipleship Questions -----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Marriage Matters. Mark 10:1-12

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. In verses 7 and 8, what are the *three* major prescriptions for marriage that Jesus teaches? What is the definition of a Biblical marriage? Malachi 2:14, Romans 7:2
2. HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.
 - Do you believe that God's design for marriage is a display of the Gospel itself? Why or why not? Ephesians 5:31-32, 1 Corinthians 6:17, Hebrews 13:4
 - What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

3. HEART For personal reflection: What will you do to uphold and promote God's design for marriage?