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## Marriage

Mark 10:1-12

Have you ever heard of the term, “shock value”? Shock value in language is something that is said that is totally unexpected and quite a bit out of character for the person to say it. When you say something that has shock value, it gives you an advantage over the person or group of people you are talking to. You should know where you are going with your shocking statement. The other people do not know. People are caught off-guard. They tend to get upset and do not know how to respond because they do not know how to understand what is said. They think, how can someone say something that extreme? **Many people from politicians** to social media influencers use shocking statements to get an immediate response. One problem with shock value statements in our world is we do not know if those statements are true or not. I think Jesus was the master at using shock value to get people to think outside their little box of beliefs they were stuck in. When Jesus used shocking statements, He framed them in such a manner that they are all true! Before Jesus used shocking statements, He used profound statements to get people to think. He said, “*I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*” (Mark 2:17). And “*The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*” (2:27). Also “*For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother*” (3:35). And also “*For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it*” (8:38). As Jesus gets closer to the end of His time on this earth, He makes some shocking statements to really make people think.

For example, Jesus told His disciples and the crowd around Him, “*How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!*” (Mark 10:23). “*The disciples were astonished at His words*” (10:24). In other words, they were shocked by what Jesus said. Why? In their little box of beliefs riches were a sign that God is blessing you and you are in good standing with Him. The Jews taught that the richer you were the better your relationship with God was. No doubt about it! Rich people were going to be the first people to get into heaven. For Jesus to say that people with riches will have a hard time getting into heaven was a shocking statement. That is opposite from what people were taught and believed. But wait, Jesus is not finished. Jesus is really going to throw the disciples for a loop. Jesus followed that shocking statement with another even more shocking statement. “*It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God*” (10:25). What? This is shocking! Can anyone fit the biggest animal they see regularly, a camel, through the small eye of a tiny needle. It is even hard for some of us to get a small thread through that eye of a needle. A camel, that is impossible. So, is it impossible for those with riches to get into heaven? Listen carefully to what Jesus said. “*How hard it is for those who **trust in riches** to enter the*

*kingdom of God*" (10:24). It is impossible for anyone who trusts in their riches to enter heaven. Actually, it is impossible for anyone to get into heaven if they are trusting in anything or anyone other than God Himself. The only way to get into heaven is to trust God completely. It is only with God that all things are possible, especially our salvation (10:27). And it cost Him dearly! Our scripture today has another shock value statement.

**Mark 10:1-2** *"Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again. The Pharisees came and asked Him, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?' testing Him.* The gospel writers Matthew, Mark and Luke only include the last journey Jesus made to Jerusalem at the end of their gospels. In the gospel of John, he records the other trips Jesus made to Jerusalem. We are to understand that no gospel writer includes everything Jesus did. The book would be too huge (John 21:25). The gospel writers wrote to give us a brief encounter with Jesus so that we may believe *"Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name"* (20:31). Jesus and His disciples have traveled from Galilee to Judea along the Jordan river. There are crowds of people who want to see Jesus and hear Him everywhere He goes. There were times that Jesus tried to spend some private time with just His disciples to train them to be disciple makers. Most of the time Jesus is surrounded by crowds. When He was, He taught them. Jesus even took questions from the people.

Here, the Pharisees asked Jesus *"Is it lawful for a man to divorce His wife?"* Why this question? Why here? The Pharisees did not ask the question because they wanted to know the answer. They knew the answer, at least they thought they knew the answer. The Pharisees asked the question to trap Jesus in a debate, to get Him to pick a side or doubt what He believes, if that were possible. People do the same thing with us. They want us to doubt our faith in Jesus. They want us to stumble and fall and lose credibility. How do we overcome these tests of faith? Know the word of God and believe it. Also, this area was ruled by Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas imprisoned John the Baptist for his views on divorce and remarriage (Mark 6:17-18). It is possible the Pharisees were hoping for a similar fate to fall upon Jesus.

**Verse 3** *"And He answered and said to them, 'What did Moses command you?'"* Nothing shocking yet. Jesus knew what the Pharisees were doing. So, He simply asked them the same question back. *"Is it lawful?"* What does the law say? This is a smart way to handle questions people ask us. Those people who ask us questions, like the Pharisees did, generally have an answer to their questions and their answer may have some biblical content but not a complete biblical understanding. These Pharisees knew what Moses wrote but they did not like it. They wanted to argue about what Moses meant. They understood God's intention but they wanted to live life on their terms.

Some people want to believe in God but not follow His teachings. People have not changed except for their possible lack of biblical knowledge.

**Verse 4** *“They said, ‘Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her.’”* The scripture in question was Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and the Pharisees debated about what is permitted by the law. The conservative Pharisees believed unfaithfulness was the only reason a marriage could end. The Liberal Pharisees allowed for any reason to end a marriage. Because we live in a fallen world relationships can be difficult. **Jesus emphasized the importance of marriage.**

**Verses 5-6** *“And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female.’”* From the very beginning God created us different. He made us either male or female. Yet, both are created in the image of God. We were created to *“Be fruitful and multiply”* (Genesis 1:28). The way God designed this to happen was through marriage that He explained in Genesis 2:24, which Jesus quotes.

**Verses 7-8** *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.”* Still, nothing shocking yet. Before Adam and Eve sinned, this was the picture of the perfect marriage. It is also the picture of a perfect marriage after the first couple sinned. This is God’s intention for every marriage because **marriage is also the picture of the union of Christ and His church.** Paul quotes these two verses in Ephesians 5:31 in his discussion about husbands and wives. Paul says, *“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church”* (5:32). We believe that once we are saved, we cannot lose our relationship with God (John 10:27-29). Just as the union of Christ Jesus and His church cannot be separated, marriages between husbands and wives are to be a living picture of our union with Christ Jesus. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved His church and gave Himself for her (5:25). As the body of Christ, the church, we are to love Him and be subject to His leadership. The goal of Jesus for us His church is to cleanse us, make us glorious, holy, without any blemish. He does this by teaching us His word. We become clean by confessing our mistakes, believing His teachings and doing what He says. This happens in marriage, right? Well, maybe we have lots of work to do.

**Verse 9** *“Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”* This is the shocking statement. This teaching is only found here and in Matthew’s account of this same event (1:6). Maybe you have not caught it before. Jesus is saying once you are married, that is it. There should be no separation. **Do not let humanity destroy what God has joined together.** In a perfect world this should work. Our problem is we do not live in a perfect world, far from it. In God’s eyes marriage is very sacred, just like

our union with Jesus Christ as Savior. Our relationship with God is very sacred. God did not save us so that we can go about believing and doing anything we want. **He saved us so that we would be united with Him to do His will.** Men and women should be very careful about who they marry, who they have relationships with. Our relationships impact who we are and who we will become. Paul wrote, “*Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits*” (1 Corinthians 15:33). We are to strive to do the right things in our marriage relationship and in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Look at the nation of Israel. God chose them. He loves them. He established a covenant with them (Deuteronomy 7:6-11). In other words, He married them (Jeremiah 3:14). God did everything He could to nurture and provide for Israel. He gave them everything they needed. He loved them completely. How did Israel respond? They rejected God and followed idols (Isaiah 1). After hundreds of years of rejection. After the nation of Israel was divided, God did something that He hated to do (Malachi 2:16). God divorced Himself from Israel, the Northern Kingdom (Jeremiah 3:8). God did not divorce Himself from Judah. God calls Judah along with everyone else to repent and return to the God who loves them to be part of His new bride, the church, the body of Christ. Jesus established a new covenant in His blood.

**Verse 10** “*In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter.*” What matter are the disciples concerned about? They are going to have to stay married to their spouse. No doubt the disciples were questioning Jesus, but what if they do this or that? What if this happens? Well, God’s plan is for marriages to last until death. Marriages are an example of God’s commitment to us as His church. He will never leave us or forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6, 8 / Hebrews 13:5).

**Verses 11-12** “*So He said to them, ‘Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.’*” Jesus knows that in a broken world there are broken relationships. He desires to protect those who are hurt by others. Jesus desires healing, restoration, forgiveness and faithfulness. We are to be married to Christ. Be faithful!

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