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Who Jesus Is & Why He Matters

What Jesus Taught

By Answering A Question About Divorce

Mark 10:1-12

INTRODUCTION

I. Jesus on Divorce & Marriage

Outer leaves of the artichoke = First layer of the onion.

A. Moses on the Law re: Divorce

1. It is permissible to divorce your wife (2-4)

a) Pharisees Interpretation

(1) Based on Deut 24:1-4

(2) Divorce is OK

b) More Narrow Boundaries of Deut 24:1-4

(1) Deut 24:1-4 is a Prohibition against a man re-marrying his former wife who had remarried someone else after he had divorced her.

(2) The Pharisees interpretation is suspect

Seems like an unwarranted generalization from a passage addressing a more particular situation.

Smells like reading into the text what you want it to say, verses reading out of the text what God intended. (Eisegesis vs. Exegesis)

c) TRANS.

Verse 5 follows the Pharisees interpretation of Moses words with “But Jesus...” which should be read as, “But Jesus, {in contrast to the Pharisees view on divorce explained,} “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.” Verse 6-9 shows...

B. God on His Intention for Marriage (Mark 10:6-9)

1. “But from the beginning of creation, God...”

a) Indicates God’s Original and Higher Plan

2. Jesus Appeals To God’s Original Intention in Creation:

a) Mark 10:6b quoting Gen 1:27

“GOD MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE...”

(1) Note the distinction, male and female

b) Mark 10:7 quoting Gen 2:24

“FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER ... AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.”

3. Jesus Adds His Conclusion in Verse 8

“consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh.”

a) Significance:

- At first glance, Jesus conclusion seems to just restate what God had said in Gen 2:24. But note that He does so changing the “the two shall become...” to “they are...” speaking to the reality that a marriage constitutes the existence of a new reality.
- The result of two being joined in marriage IS the formation of one new entity.
- We should see two people joined in marriage NOT as two, but as ONE.
- New Reality/Entity = “one flesh”

4. Jesus’ Instruction that Follows from God’s Intention

a) Mark 10:9

- “What therefore God has joined together, (Aor. Act. Indicative) let no man separate.” (Present, Active, Imperative)
- Note that it is God who joins a man and a woman in marriage.
- Note also the implied permanence of the situation reflected in the ongoing nature of the prohibition, “let no man separate.”

- If the original question was, “Is it OK for a man to divorce his wife?” Jesus in effect answers here, “No!” Because from the beginning God intended marriage to be His joining of a male and a female into a new entity -- one flesh -- which no man should separate.
- I hear Jesus tone: So all your looking for loop-holes should stop and you should just focus on making your marriage the marriage of God’s intention.
- This may be a message for some of you who are tired of your marriage and entertaining a perceived upgrade. Push that temptation away. From last week: cut off that hand or foot, or gouge out that eye that so tempts you.
- [James 4:7](#) -- Submit therefore to God **Resist** the **devil** and he will flee from you.
- [2 Timothy 2:22](#) -- Now **flee** from youthful **lusts** and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

5. TRANS. – V10...

“And in the house the disciples began questioning Him about this again.”

So, as He has done in the past, Jesus offers His disciples who question Him further, further insight.

C. Divorce + Remarry = Adultery Against First Spouse (11-12)

And He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.”

Jesus finally addresses divorce head on and gives it’s implication re: the adultery it causes in the case of remarriage.

Here is the rule: If you divorce your spouse and remarry you will be committing adultery against your first spouse. Yikes!

D. Recovery from Past Circumstance

1. Mark’s Passage is the General Rule w/o Discussion of Complicating Complexities

2. Many Marriage Problems Have Complicating Circumstances.

a) Infidelity

Mat 19:9: ⁹“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

b) Abandonment

[1 Corinthians 7:15](#) -- Yet if the **unbelieving** one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.

c) Death

And that does not include murder, just in case that has crossed any of your minds.

d) Abuse

Which warrants separation. There is no Biblical mandate to remain physically as the target for another's abuse. If you are getting abused, step back to safety, get help from the police or from your pastor or a counselor. Work on the marriage from a safe distance until the health of the union is restored.

3. Where to go from the place of having already divorced your spouse

a) Reconcile to Your Spouse

Make every effort to reconcile to your spouse

b) Remember & Receive God's Forgiveness

The atoning work of the cross of Christ was sufficient for your past sins
1 John 1:9

c) Be the Child of God He has Saved You to Be

Like the prodigal who made choices which distanced him from God, but who came back to his father hoping just to be a servant – you will find The Father running to meet you and embracing you not as a servant, but as a son.

d) Walk with Jesus from This Point Forward

Next to, just 1 inch behind
Eph 4:1 – Walk in a manner worthy...
Let Him lead in the dance of life

E. Trans

So that is the outer leaves of the artichoke of Jesus' teaching. Our Bibles probably even label this paragraph, "Jesus Teaching on Divorce." But if you know God's Word, you know there is always more good food to be found one layer in. Let's look at the inner leaves of the artichoke. Point number 2 on your outlines where we see what Jesus taught on the Law...

II. Jesus on the Law of Moses vs. The Will of God

The inner leaves of the artichoke

A. Contrast: Law of Moses vs. Will of God

Contrast Between the Narrow Bounds of the Law of Moses versus the Much Larger Will of God

1. What's the Difference

- Jesus' acknowledgment of the Law of Moses w/o refuting it and ...
- His appeal to the pre-fall creation order as the way God intended it “**from the beginning**” and the standard that is still valid today ...
- when taken together help me to see a difference not only in content but in priority of importance between the Law and the larger will of God.

The will of God as expressed in His **original intention** for things, including marriage, is more important, i.e., it is closer to the heart of God and longer lasting than the regulations of this Law which address the fallen circumstances, here the circumstance of divorce, which God never intended in the first place.

Let me try to say that more clearly:

- What God said in the beginning about marriage is superior to any regulations He later gave about it is compromise in the Law.
- What God said in the beginning about marriage continues to be the highest standard and the one Jesus held up as the standard we should use in all times.

TRANS. – One of the things that helps us see this to be true is the context in which this particular law was given.

B. Context of This Law

1. Jesus Identifies the context as “Hardness of Heart” V.5

In verse 5, this is the reason Jesus says Moses put forth this law in the Deut 24:1-4 reference.

2. ILLUS. – The Lifeguard and the Foolish Beachgoer

North Shore Oahu, or Winter in Monterey.

Lifeguard to novice beachgoer, First instruction: “Stay above the high water line and never turn your back on the sea.”

Novice: I'm no novice. I don't need a stupid lifeguard to tell me what to do. So, down to the water's edge he goes. Up comes the waves. [Disobedience]

Out with the rip he goes. Help! Help! In goes the lifeguard.

Lifeguard to Novice beachgoer, Second Instruction: “Hold on tight to this rescue tube and don't let go.”

Now, if you only pick up the story at the point where the lifeguard is telling the novice to hold on tight, one might conclude that lifeguards are just concerned with rescuing people when they get in trouble in the water and that is perfectly alright to get swept away, because a lifeguard will come out to you, give you a rescue tube, and tell you to hold on tight, while he pulls you to safety.

But that is making a faulty assumption because you came in halfway through the story. A wise lifeguard knows that if he can prevent someone from needing to be rescued in the first place, everyone is better off. That is why he said first, “Stay above the high water line...”

The Law concerning divorce is like the lifeguard's second command. They are words spoken in the context of the novice beachgoer's disregarding the lifeguard's first command.

And like the lifeguard's first exhortation, "Stay above the high water line...!", the first and better plan regarding marriage is to stay married until death do you part. That God's word speaks to the issue of divorce does not necessarily imply that divorce is God's best intention. Hopefully, as my illustration showed, it is instruction for those who have already turned away from or who have been turned away from God's first and better plan of continuance in "one flesh" relationship of marriage.

TRANS. One of the things that I'm trying to sharpen my understanding of is the place of the Law in God's biggest plan. Are we still to be bound to some or all the observances called out in the Law of Moses? If so, which ones? If not, how do we treat them and what do we glean from them?

C. The Law in God's Big Plan

1. It Followed "the Promise"

a) God Promised to Reverse the Curse

(1) Gen 3:15

b) God Promised to Bless All Families of the Earth

(1) Through Abraham – Gen 12

(2) Through His Seed

c) Gal 3:17

¹⁷What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.

d) Trans.

The Law did not Replace the Promise, rather...

2. It Defined the Terms of God's Relationship w/ Israel

- At the heart of the Law was a covenant – a contract between God and His chosen people, the descendents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who Himself was renamed Israel and who's descendents as a nation were called by that name.
- It defined the terms of a relationship by which God took the nation of Israel to be His people and the people took God to be their God.
- The type of a relationship formed was a Father-Son relationship. God the Father was related by the covenant to His Son, collective NATION of Israel.
- **I'm helped** to understand this covenant relationship that was at the heart of the Mosaic Law by **our modern day wedding ceremony** which is possibly the covenant we are most familiar with. In a wedding ceremony a man and a woman establish their relationship as husband and wife and they define terms of the covenant: remain faithful to each other, for better or worse, for richer for poorer,

forsaking all others, till death do us part. Now most don't regard these stipulations of the covenant to be a list of rules that are burdensome (at least at the time they make them), but simply what would be expected of two people in a loving marriage relationship. The actions promised are those that come naturally from the love they are promising to each other in the exchanging of vows in the covenant of marriage.

- This is primarily what the Law is to Israel and God -- A covenant relationship establishing a connection between God the Father and His covenant son.
- Pastor Kit Culver in our last two weeks of the Sacred Space study has helped us see that the Mosaic Law is not primarily a list of rules that must be obeyed to avoid punishment, but rather, the covenant that lies at the heart of the Law is that by which the estranged people of Israel were joined to their loving father God.
- When we think of the law today in our culture we think of fastening our seat belts and not talking on our cell phones so that we can avoid a hefty fine. Pastor Kit thinks this image clouds our minds as to what the meaning of the OT Law was. The Law of Moses did not so much specify criminal violations but relational violations.
- Being first and foremost relational in nature, violations of the Law, like worshipping other god's, are described in the Bible by terms like adultery and harlotry – relational terms.

3. It Was Part, NOT All, of God's Big Plan

a) Preparatory, Anticipatory and Prophetic of the Ultimate

b) Pictured the Ultimate Restoration of Mankind to God

It was a partial, temporary restoration of the nation of Israel to communion with God. But it was neither permanent, nor did it secure restoration to all the families of the earth. It was, in a sense, God's sketch of the completed master-peace yet to be painted.

4. It Sketched God's Ultimate Plan for Restoration

It pictured a coming covenant that would be better than this first one whereby God would bring about a restored relationship between Himself and all who would join themselves to Him by this new covenant which was personified in Jesus Christ.

Listen to OT book of Jer 31:31ff as quoted in NT book of Hebrews 8

Ultimately, Jesus Himself is the New and Better Covenant; and the blood that ratified it was His, and the people it covered are all the families of the earth.

5. It Was Fulfilled in Jesus Christ

a) Mat 5:17

“Do not think I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.”

b) It Had an End/Completion

Gal 3:19 -- Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until **the seed** would come to whom the promise had been made.

Gal 3:16 -- Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your **seed**," **that is, Christ**.

c) That End was Wrapped Up in **Christ**

D. TRANS

In our passage, Jesus acknowledged the Law but appealed to the greater will of God as explained in creation.

As we approach the OT Law, we need to keep it within its God-ordained hands following the promises fulfilled in Christ.

As with so many of the OT events and people, the covenant and the law all pictured and prepared us to understand and embrace Jesus, God's beloved Son. It is to Him we now turn as our final point and the heart of the artichoke we have been getting to. This passage first teaches about divorce and marriage, then it helps us understand the Law of Moses in relation to God's bigger picture, but lastly and ultimately, it teaches us about Jesus Himself.

III. Jesus on Himself

The Heart of the Artichoke

A. As the Fulfillment of the Law

We have seen Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law

B. As the New Covenant

We have already also seen Jesus as the New Covenant
TRANS. -- Perhaps what remains to be brought out is Jesus...

C. As the Authoritative Interpreter of the Scriptures

Jesus Demonstrates His Superior Ability & Authority to Interpret Scripture

1. Elsewhere in Mark, Over...:

a) The Scribes in General as Teachers

(1) Mark 1:22, 27

22 They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

27 They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."

b) The Pharisees re: the Sabbath

(1) Mark 2:23-28

c) The Pharisees re: religious rituals

(1) Mark 7:6-13

Hand washing and Corban

2. Here, Over the Pharisees Understanding Regarding Marriage and Divorce

His words come like a wise and experienced voice that distinguishes itself among the many other voices by its obvious superior perspective: Yes, Moses permitted divorce, but that was because of the hardness of your heart; from the beginning God had a different plan for marriage...

After hearing this, we say, yes, of course, it is not about what we can get away with under the loopholes of the law but about pursuing God's original intention.

The value of God's original and continuing intention is greater than the value of a context-specific regulation made as a concession to find "the lesser of two evils". (Lane p.355)

3. Summary: Jesus is THE Teacher/Explainer of God's Word

I want to close this message with what this text testifies to: Jesus is the ultimate authoritative teacher of truth pertaining to God.

Of course it should not shock us that Jesus is the superior interpreter of Scripture. He Himself is God the Son, called in the Gospel of John the very Word of God (Jn 1) and One with the Father (Jn 17).

Jesus is the Divine Interpreter of Scripture

D. Implications of Jesus as THE teacher – THE Divine Interpreter of Scripture

1. We need to enroll in His school = Be His Disciples

As did Carrie Overton, Kara just graduated from college. Every semester of her college career she was enrolled in a number of classes. For each class she had to attend lectures, some of them had labs, and each required outside reading, assignments, some group projects... you know the school scene. Each semester you could look at her schedule and see she was actively engaged in school. We can look at her transcripts and know what she has been up to in regards to her learning for the last several years.

a) Don't keep this abstract, get personal

(1) Evaluate Your Practical Discipleship

(2) Are you following Him in such a way that He would regard you as one of His disciples?

(3) What Class of His are You Enrolled In Right Now?

(4) How do you answer the question, "Who are you?"

(5) What are you engaged in that is intentionally in response to Him as your Teacher and Lord?

(6) Do you look to Jesus' teachings to shed light on the OT passages and do you look to the OT passages to see the sketch of what was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus?

2. Enroll right now by making a personal commitment to be His disciple.

IV. Closing Prayer

Let's Pray