

HUSBANDS AND WIVES

Mark 10:1-12

Intro: As we come to chapter 10 in Mark, we can see from verse 1 that our Lord was beginning a new phase of His ministry. Up to this point, the Lord had been in the northern part of Israel, and His ministry had been in the area known as Galilee. And that is why it has been called, His Galilean ministry. But in our text for today we learn that He had moved south into Judea. We notice that he was on the eastern side of the Jordan River. So this was an important move, but one in which His ministry on earth would come to a close.

But the first thing that Mark tells us as we move on into verse 2 is that the Pharisees were there. And, as in our Lord's previous encounters with them, we see that they were up to no good. They always seemed to have a question for the Lord, but it was not because they were interested in understanding the truth. It was because they wanted to trap Him into saying something which they might use in bringing charges against Him. Their question was about divorce. It was a question that was very controversial even in those days, and the Jews themselves were divided as to what the answer should be. Some were very strict teaching that there should never be any divorce; others would allow a divorce for almost any reason.

Specifically, as you can see from your Bible, this was:

I. THEIR QUESTION: "IS IT LAWFUL FOR A MAN TO PUT AWAY HIS WIFE?" (Mark 10:2).

By the verb, *to put away*, they meant, *to divorce*. But notice that Mark quickly added the words, "tempting Him," for the benefit of those who would read this account. They were not sincere in asking their question. They were hypocrites. They probably thought that our Lord did not know what they were doing. But, of course, He did! He knew exactly what they were up to.

But the most amazing thing to me is, that although He knew what they were doing, He answered them like they were being sincere. And this is an important lesson for us, too. We don't always know, like the Lord did, when people approach us with a question, whether they are really seeking to know the truth or not. But the Lord did! And He answered them just

like He would have if He had known them to be sincere. We need to do the same. We never know how the Lord may see fit to use the truth even in a hypocrite's heart. It is our business to tell people the truth as far as we know it; it is up to the Lord as to how He may see fit to use it in the life of that person who comes to us. But it places the questioner in a great position of responsibility when they are exposed to the truth.

What was the Lord's answer?

II. THE LORD'S IMMEDIATE ANSWER (Mark 10:3).

He answered their question with a question of His own: "What did Moses command you?"

Now notice what the Lord was doing. As far as these Pharisees were concerned, they probably thought that they were addressing a person who was just another man. To be sure our Lord had attracted a lot of attention by His teaching and because He could perform such wonderful miracles – healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, raising the dead, and so on. But if the Lord were just another man, what difference would his opinion make. Such a question as this needs to be referred to God. What did He say, if anything, about divorce?

We know, and those Pharisees should have known, what Moses had to say because they were supposed to be acquainted with the writings of Moses. But we know, and they should have known, that Moses only told the people to do what the Lord told him to tell them. So that the writings of Moses which we have in the Bible, were the words of God.

Now before I go any farther, let me mention that people generally don't know to go to the Bible to find answers to their questions. But if they do know that that is the place to go, many times, perhaps most of the time, they do not believe what the Bible says. However, that is the place to go. If we are just thinking about some opinion that Moses had, or that you have, or that I have, we could be right, *or we could be wrong!* Sometimes people take part of what the Bible says, but they don't take it all.

I was looking for the news on our TV just yesterday, and I came upon an interview that the announcer was having with a man about faith. I don't know the announcer's name, nor the name of the man he was interviewing. But the man he was interviewing was supposed to be an authority on

faith. Well, the announcer asked this man, “How does a person get faith?” And this man said that the Bible says that “faith comes by hearing.” And so, he said, that if you want to have faith, find some people who have faith, and listen to them, and perhaps you will get faith that way. Now that man may have been an authority on some things, I can’t say what, but he was no authority on faith. The Bible doesn’t say that “faith comes by hearing” people. It says, as most of you know, that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” You will find that in Romans 10:17. It is by hearing *what the Bible has to say* that God gives us faith. If you just listen to anybody whom you think might have faith, you may get yourself more confused than you were before *unless that person is telling you accurately what the Bible says*. The Bible is God’s Word – all of it! And whatever the Bible says, it says on the highest authority, and that should end all discussion.

But going back to our text, what was the answer that the Pharisees gave to the Lord’s question?

III. THE PHARISEES ANSWER TO THE LORD’S QUESTION (Mark 10:4).

Did they know what Moses said? Yes, they did. Their response was based upon Deuteronomy 24:1, but the whole statement of what Moses said goes on down through verse 5 of that chapter. But Moses did say that under conditions set down in those verses that a man could divorce his wife.

Moses and the Jewish people whom he led out of Egypt probably understood these words of the Lord, but it was not until our Lord came that we were told why the God allowed what He did.

At this point in our text the Lord taught these Pharisees what they needed to know about divorce. He conducted a brief class giving a lesson on marriage. This goes down through verse 9. Verse 10 tells us that later when our Lord and His disciples were in the house, the disciples raised this same question with the Lord. In verses 12 and 13 we have basically what the Lord told them.

Now this is a big subject. And it is a very important subject. But it is not simple because of the many different circumstances which cause people to think about divorce. When I was a child and in my teen years, divorce

was very, very rare. There was probably more of it than I knew. There has always been immorality which so often leads to divorce, but the way our generation has turned away from the Lord, the divorce question has taken on proportions greater, I am sure, than any previous generation. That is why we need the teaching that the Lord gave to the Pharisees and to His own disciples.

IV. THE LORD'S TEACHING ABOUT MARRIAGE (Mark 10:5-9).

I think that the point the Lord was making was that what the Pharisees needed to understand in order to have the right idea about divorce was that they understand, first of all, the Lord's plan regarding marriage.

The first thing that Lord said was that it was because of the hardness of, He didn't say "their" hearts, but of "your hearts." The big problem in marriage is the hardness of the human heart. There are many, many things that we face in society today, and in our own hearts, which are caused by sin. If there never had been sin, there never would have been a single divorce. The words "hardness of heart" are the translation of one word in the Greek. It speaks of being destitute of spiritual understanding. It speaks of being resistant to the truth. It speaks of being so calloused to the truth that we not only will not listen to it, but that we do not have the capacity to understand it. Don't point an accusing figure at the Jews in the OT because our hearts are just like theirs, and the only reason all of us have not gotten into more trouble than we have, is because God in His grace gave us eyes to see that our problem was sin, and that the remedy for our sin is Christ and salvation. Our generation refuses to listen to any talk about sin, and so we are rapidly destroying ourselves because we are slaves of the very sins that we say aren't sins. Over two thousand years ago the Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 6:7-8:

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

But let me point out to you a second point that our Lord made with the Pharisees – and people in their hardheartedness toward God and His Word have tried to change this too.

Look at verse 6. Where did we come from? We are people whom God

has created. God's crowning work in creation was when He created Adam, and then He created Eve. And God made a man and a woman and He was the One Who brought them together as a husband and wife. And He only made one man and one woman. He didn't create two Adams and tell them to be fruitful and multiply because two men do not have that kind of ability. Nor did He create two women, and tell them to multiply. Two men never made a home, nor did two women. God made one man and one woman so that we would see that a man and a woman are what makes a family, and it takes a man and a woman to have children. Any other idea is a perversion of the truth which only the hardhearted will give any thought to. God made us for Himself. He never intended that we should even try to live without Him. Any other idea about the human family than that which God created in the beginning is a perversion of the truth.

But there is still another point that the Lord made with the Pharisees. It is that when the Lord brings us together, a man and a woman, and makes them husband and wife, they are no longer two, but are one. But it takes the Lord to make us see how wonderful a marriage can be. Every marriage has problems which need to be worked out, but there is no problem that we can have but what the Lord can get us through it. Our problem usually is that we don't have the right idea about marriage. We don't recognize what a marvelous thing the Lord has done in bringing us together.

Oftentimes people get divorced before then know the Lord, and even remarry. Nobody can undo the past. But what we need to be concerned about is the future. The Lord deals with us where we are. He is sufficient for every need we can possibly have. We need to submit ourselves to the Lord. Seek His grace to do what husbands and wives are supposed to do in order to please the Lord. Make certain that your relationship to the Lord is right according to Scripture. It is still true that when a man's ways please the Lord, the Lord makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. If the Lord can do that with enemies, He sure can do it for us as husbands and wives.

And so the Lord concluded with the Pharisees by saying, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." "Put asunder" means divorce. For those of us who know the Lord divorce is not an option. It really is not an option for anyone, but it is often inevitable for people who do not know the Lord.

Finally, look with me at what Mark has recorded for us about what the Lord said to His disciples.

VI. THE LORD AND THE DISCIPLES (Mark 10:10-12).

Why do you think the disciples brought this matter up again with the Lord? He didn't bring it up with them; they brought it up with Him. I can't answer that question. But I know that people usually ask questions about things that are bothering themselves. We know that Peter was married, and probably most of the other apostles were married. Maybe some of them were having trouble in their marriages. Whatever may have been the reason, or reasons, the Lord warned them against adultery.

God created us to be married and have families. Family life is very dear and very important to the Lord. Any violation of it is certain to bring the judgment of God. One of the greatest testimonies we can have to a lost and fallen world, is families who know what it means to know the Lord and to walk in fellowship with Him. May the Lord work in all of us to make our families strong, and no family can be strong unless the Lord is preeminent in both the husband and the wife.

Concl: The Lord has put these words in the Bible because we need them.

We live in a wicked world, and temptations are everywhere around us. It is not because we are smarter than other people who do not know the Lord, but the Lord has opened our eyes and our hearts to the truth of His Word so that with the deepest gratitude to Him, and with humble hearts, we need to be praying daily that the Lord will keep us from falling, and that we will be able to demonstrate in our lives how faithful God is in meeting our needs when we seek to live according to His will by the power of the Holy Spirit.