

Text: Mark 10:1-12

Title: "Let's Talk About God's Plan"

Introduction: I love doing weddings. Over the past 10 years, I have averaged about 12 weddings per year. This year, I will be performing 16 weddings ... one of those will be my first double wedding! I'm pretty excited.

Every time I do a wedding, I spend time with the couple that is about to get married just to talk about what it means to be married. One of the things I attempt to bring out with every couple is that marriage was God's idea. And I share with them that men and women are different ... I have shared this here before as well.

Think about it, we are so different. Did you guys know that you are different? You two ever gone shopping together? How did that go? When it comes to the word 'shopping', men and women hear two different things ... we have different definitions. Women = walking around / cappuccino. Men = hunting!

Men are conquerors. Go shopping for a dress? Let's get it home! So, it drives most men nuts to 'shop'! We hunt!

Women find a good one, men are ready to check out and the woman sets it down (NO! good one = don't leave it here in the woods.). Looking some more! Then... Talking ... Shhh, the dresses will hear you coming!

We are different, by God's design ... it's not a cruel joke, that's the way God wanted it. Then, God said, "Yes, and the two will become one!"

Well, as we continue our series about "Jesus and the Matrix" ... the set landscape of religion that Jesus dealt with in 1st Century Israel ... we find that Jesus is on the move. Since last week, we have moved from Chapter 8 to Chapter 10. Last week, Jesus was on the Sea of Galilee with his disciples after an encounter with the Pharisees, and Jesus had to remind his hungry buddies WHO was in the boat with them.

Since last week when they were on the sea headed to Bethsaida on the northern coast-line, the disciples went north to Caesarea Philippi (and I will tell you more about that trip in our next worship series) where Jesus and his disciples had some important conversations. After some time there and Jesus healing and teaching, they returned to Capernaum. There they tried to lay low because Jesus wanted some quality teaching time just for his disciples.

That's where we pick up our Scripture for today. Before we get to Chapter 10, let me invite you to take the insert out of your program (the one with the bible verses on it). On one side you will find our Scripture, and on the bottom of that same side you will see a brief outline of how we are going to approach this Scripture. Please take time to fill in the blanks and jot down whatever other notes get your attention. I hope that writing down some of what we talk about will help you, and maybe somebody else in your life, in your faith journey.

Here we go with Chapter 10...

READ MARK 10:1-12 NOW AND PRAY!

Okay, Jesus is on the move again ... this time he is headed SOUTH (show MAP!). As you can see on our map, Jesus probably ended up somewhere in the area of Perea. He has gone south ... probably through the Decapolis, which means?? (10 towns) Then, Jesus crosses the Jordan River to the East side somewhere around Samaria.

Well, here is a good question...

- I. Where is He Going? (v.1a)
 - A. Remember that Jesus was trying to spend time alone with his disciples before they left Capernaum?
 1. Jesus wanted time alone with his disciples to teach them some things before time was up.
 2. Sarah and I just realized that we just have 3 more years with Nicole in the house ... question = What do we need to teach her before she is gone!?
 3. That's what Jesus was doing in Capernaum ... trying to teach them what they would need to know!
 4. Jesus also shared with them what was going to happen soon ... Pharisees would finally win out.
 - B. Jesus just left the region of Galilee for the last time until after his resurrection (John 21).
 1. Jesus Galilee ministry was over. It was time to go up to Jerusalem.
 2. Remember, Jesus knows why he came to earth in the form of a human baby...
- II. What is He Doing? (v.1b)
 - A. Teaching and preaching of course. It's what Jesus did.
 1. What would we expect of Michael Jordan if he came to town?
 2. What would we expect of Frank Sinatra if he came to town? Aretha Franklin? Third Day?
 - B. Can you imagine what Jesus might be teaching and preaching about? I'm guessing that it's the same message he had from the start ... (Mark 1:14-15)
 1. The Kingdom of God is near.
 2. Turn away from your sinful ways ...
 3. Believe the Good News! The Good News is that the Son of God is here to take away the sins of all the people in the world throughout history by hanging on a cross and taking those sins to the death.
 4. The wages of sin is death ... death is what Jesus did for us.
 - C. Then what happens? The Pharisees approach Jesus again (remember, there were probably quite a few Pharisees following along with the crowds) with intentions to trap him.
 1. Jesus is preaching the Good News / Kingdom of God.
 2. Again, the Pharisees are given a chance to turn to Jesus.

- III. A Great Question (v. 2)
- A. Instead, they come at Jesus with a GREAT QUESTION. A great question if it had been done with searching, repentant hearts for God.
- B. Instead it was used to trap Jesus ... selfishly (preference vs. priority).
1. Again, the Pharisees are looking out for themselves.
 2. Remember, we talked about what would have to happen for the Pharisees to change ... admit they were wrong ... bow down to Jesus (carpenter from Nazareth) as the Messiah / Son of God.
 3. These things were not going to happen.
 4. The Pharisees here were more concerned about their PREFERENCE than they were any GODLY PRIORITY.
 5. Often we get way more excited about our PREFERENCE than we do GOD'S PRIORITIES.
- C. In order to understand the trap that was being set, we have to know the context that the Pharisees were speaking from.
1. Remember that Jesus has gone into the territory of Perea near where the Jordan River and the Dead Sea meet.
 2. This is the same area where Jesus was baptized at the beginning of his ministry. QUIZ TIME!
 3. Do you remember who baptized him? (John)
 4. Harder question: Do you remember how John died? (beheaded by Herod upon the request of Herodias)
 5. Still harder question: Do you remember WHY he was beheaded? Right! Because John kept telling Herod that he should not have taken his Brother Philip's wife (Herodias) to be his own!
 6. John spoke out against adultery and divorce and was killed by Herod (Herodias was mad!) ... the Pharisees could only hope the same for Jesus.
- D. I get asked this question often. "What does our faith say about divorce?" At least some of the time when I'm asked, somebody is looking for an easy out...
- E. Well, when it comes to questions like that, I go to God. What does God have to say about divorce?
1. Let me start with this ... as we approach this difficult and emotionally charged subject ... let me start with Who I know God to be. God loves us more than we will ever understand.
 2. God's GRACE and Forgiveness are ours for the asking.
 3. I have had close friends and family members go through divorce and I cannot imagine the pain that everyone involved goes through.
 4. Please know that I find new life in Jesus Christ for those who have hurt and are still hurting because of this topic. Whether you personally were involved, or your parents, etc.
- F. Jesus went to God for the answer too...

IV. The Answer (v.3-9)

- A. “Remember Moses’ Law? What does that say?”
1. Of course the Pharisees knew what Moses’ Law said about divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1). That was their scripture. That was their job.
 - a. They knew that Moses had said that if a man wanted to divorce his wife, he had to write a letter explaining and send her away.
 - b. Hand her a letter of divorce and that was it!
 2. They also knew that there were two schools of thought at that time around Moses’ Law.
 - a. Some followed one Rabbi (Shammai) that was very strict and said that you couldn’t divorce your wife unless you discovered after marriage that she wasn’t a virgin.
 - b. Others followed Rabbi Hillel who was quite lenient and said that you could divorce your wife for just about any reason (burned dinner, etc.).
 3. The Pharisees also hoped that Jesus would slip up and get the crowd angry by siding with one or the other.
- B. Jesus doesn’t side with what their culture is talking about ... Jesus goes back to God’s Word! Two answers:
1. Only because of your hard-hearted wickedness...
 2. BUT, GOD’S PLAN was seen from the beginning...
- C. Jesus does this to talk about their hardened hearts. There were only two ways to be separated from this physical, emotional, spiritual cleaving (merging, intertwined, etc.); death or adultery.
1. Death ... “Till death do us part.”
 2. Adultery ... Adultery did not result in divorce. Adultery resulted in death by stoning!
- D. Hardened hearts = Moses only put this into effect because of the hard, unloving hearts of men at that time. Men thought of women as property ... didn’t like it or saw something better = get rid of the one you have and start all over.
1. Problem #1 = If the men didn’t have a way to divorce, they could only remarry if their present wife died (Till death do us part) ... If death is what it took, that could be arranged.
 2. Problem #2 = If a man pushed his wife out, she suddenly had no social status and might be considered a prostitute.
 3. So, Moses Law had to compromise the original purpose of marriage because of the hearts of men ... their hearts were hard to GOD’S PLAN!
- E. So, Jesus explains this for Deuteronomy 24, but then goes back further for the second part of his answer ... Adam and Eve! (READ 10:6-9)
1. God’s plan was that no one would get a divorce!

2. The two shall become ONE FLESH ... intertwined, enmeshed, woven together! You cannot tear it apart without tearing out part of both people.
3. Jesus reminds us that marriage is not just a physical ceremony, but a spiritual ceremony.
4. We stand before God and say, "For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part." That pretty much covers everything! We PROMISE.

V. The Explanation (v.10-12)

- A. Later, Jesus and his disciples are alone and THEY brought up the subject again ... remember, at least a few of Jesus' disciples were married. And Jesus gets pretty blunt here:
 1. If a man divorces and marries someone else, he commits adultery against his former wife.
 2. If a woman divorces and marries someone else, she commits adultery against her former husband.
 3. This equality was unheard of in the 1st Century ... Jesus was raising the status of women.
- B. Take marriage seriously! We can talk about what we prefer marriage and divorce to be, or we can talk about God's Plan! "Thus, it is not to be entered into unadvisedly but, reverently, discretely and in absolute awe of God."
- C. Don't get married until you understand that men and women are different!
 1. Don't get married unless you are planning for forever!
 2. Don't get married if you think that the marriage is about YOU!
 3. God is the one who created us men and women and said that we should be together. We need to go back to God to find out how to do that!
- D. God's plans for us include obedience to God's plan. Part of God's plan is that each of us be totally sold-out for Jesus Christ. That we live our lives every day and in every way out of an understanding of what Jesus did on the cross...

Communion!