

woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife? 1 Corinthians 7:12–16 (ESV)

- Paul allows divorce if the unbeliever insists on leaving.

## 7. Conclusion

1. **God created marriage to be a lifelong relationship.** Divorce may look like the easy answer but it is always a costly and painful answer. Divorce should never be treated casually.
2. **There are times when divorce is permitted.** Jesus permitted divorce for adultery. Paul permitted divorce when the unbeliever insisted on leaving.
3. **The church's attitude toward divorce must combine truth and grace.** We must hold to the truth about when divorce is right and when it is wrong. We must also be quick to extend grace to those who have sinned in this area, confess their sin, and are seeking God's forgiveness for sin. We must not treat divorce and adultery like they are the unforgivable sins.

### Life Group Questions

1. Read Mark 10:1-12. How were the Pharisees trying to trap Jesus? How did Jesus avoid the trap and catch the Pharisees in their own snare?
2. Why did Jesus go back to Genesis 2:24 in his answer to the Pharisees?
3. What reasons does Mark 10:6-9 give to show us why divorce is always costly and painful? How would you counsel a friend considering divorce after what you learned from today's study?
4. Read Ephesians 5:21-33. Paul says the permanence of our earthly marriages are a picture of the permanence of Jesus's relationship with us. How can we better live out that picture in our marriages today? If you are married, what things could you do to change? If you are single, what things should couples do to better align their marriages with this heavenly reality?
5. From what we learned in this sermon, how would you counsel someone in the church who divorced before becoming a Christian, but wants to remarry after becoming a Christian? How would you counsel a Christian whose supposedly Christian spouse has left them? How would you counsel a couple that claims to be Christians, but there is physical abuse in the home? How would you counsel a couple that claims to be Christians but there is verbal abuse in the home?

# MARK THE KING AND THE CROSS

## Mark 10:1-12 – Jesus On Divorce

October 27, 2019

### 1. The Background

*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.*  
Mark 10:1 (ESV)

### 2. The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus on the topic of divorce.

*And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"* Mark 10:2 (ESV)

*And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"* Matthew 19:3 (ESV)

#### A. The topic of divorce was controversial for religious reasons.

*When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house,...* Deuteronomy 24:1 (ESV)

- **Rabbi Hillel** (The Liberal)

- **Rabbi Shammai** (The Conservative)

*If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.*  
Leviticus 20:10 (ESV)

*He that desires to be divorced from his wife for any cause whatsoever (and many such causes happen among men), let him in writing give assurance that he will never use her as his wife any more; for by this means she may be at liberty to marry another husband, although*

before this bill of divorce be given, she is not to be permitted so to do. (Josephus, Ant. 4.8.23 §253)

## B. The topic of divorce was controversial for political reasons.

### 3. Jesus explained the danger of divorce by explaining the permanence of marriage.

He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." Mark 10:3–4 (ESV)

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the Lord. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance. Deuteronomy 24:1–4 (ESV)

1. These verses discouraged hasty divorces by making the man explain in writing the reason for the divorce.
2. These verses provided the woman with a certificate of divorce to protect her dignity and to protect her from interference by her former spouse.
3. These verses made it impossible for a former spouse to remarry his former wife to discourage thoughtless divorce.

And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment." Mark 10:5 (ESV)

*I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel,... Malachi 2:16 (NIV84)*

*But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. Mark 10:6–8 (ESV)*

### What happens in marriage that makes a divorce so painful?

1. God created marriage to be a permanent bond.
2. Marriage makes a new family. All other relational bonds come after your spouse, even your parents.
3. Marriage turns two people into one.
4. God says marriage can only be between one man and one woman.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Genesis 2:24 (ESV)

5. In marriage, God seals a couple together.

What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. Mark 10:9 (ESV)

### 4. Jesus says those who divorce and marry another commit adultery.

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

The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." Matthew 19:10 (ESV)

### 5. What is the divorce exception clause?

"And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." Matthew 19:9 (ESV)

- Jesus allows divorce for adultery.

### 6. What does Paul say about divorce?

To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any