

The Gospel of Mark

Walking with the Servant Savior

Lesson 14 Mark 10:1–52

Day One: Marriage and Divorce

On His final journey toward Jerusalem, Jesus left Capernaum and went into Judea. As usual, wherever Jesus went large crowds gathered and He taught them. (Note: this is the area ruled by Herod Antipas, the magistrate who put John the Baptist to death for preaching against Herod's adulterous marriage to his brother's wife.) The Pharisees were there, hoping to trap Jesus with a trick question about marriage and divorce.

Read Mark 10:1–16 and Deuteronomy 24:1–4

In this day there were two conflicting views on marriage and divorce that hinged on the words *some uncleanness* found in Deuteronomy 24. The more liberal view held that a man could divorce his wife for any reason, and that the *uncleanness* could refer to anything that displeased the husband. The other much stricter view allowed divorce only if the wife was not a virgin when she married, and in that case the *uncleanness* referred to adultery.

The Pharisees raised the initial question: "*Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?*" They were hoping that Jesus would choose one side and end up offending the other, or that He would perhaps speak out against the Law of Moses.

1. The Pharisees assumed that Jesus' response in verse 3 was a reference to the instructions laid down in Deuteronomy 24:1–4. How did the Pharisees use Moses' law to justify their position to Jesus? v. 4
 - a. According to Jesus, why did Moses write this law? v. 5

Under Jewish law, only the man could initiate divorce proceedings, the wife did not have that right. Because of Moses' law, a man could not simply throw his wife out; he had to write a formal letter—a certificate of divorce—allowing her to remarry and reclaim her cherished dowry. This gave limited protection to the wife, making it harder for her husband to do away with her.

Note: Jesus asked the Pharisees what Moses had *commanded* them (v. 3), and they replied with what Moses had *permitted* them (v. 4). Moses wrote a provision into the law in Deuteronomy 24 because of the peoples' stubborn refusal to accept God's view of marriage. He did not approve or authorize divorce; he *acknowledged* it because the *people's hearts were hardened* (v. 5).

In an effort to expose the Pharisees true motives, Jesus elaborated further in verses 6–9 about Moses' command being the same as God's command regarding marriage in Genesis 1–2.

2. According to God's view of marriage *from the beginning* . . .

- How did God create the partners?
- For what purpose?
- What do they become?

3. What prohibition did Jesus add? v. 9

Jesus made God's plan for marriage very clear: at Creation He designed and approved one kind of bond—man to woman—that was to be a covenant relationship, an indissoluble union.

4. When the disciples questioned Him later, what stipulation did Jesus add?
vv. 10–12

These words were significant to Mark's readers, since under Roman law a wife was allowed to initiate divorce proceedings.

Verses 13–16 are a beautiful compliment to Jesus' teaching on marriage and highlight the importance placed upon the family. When couples commit to each other in a permanent, sacred partnership, they fulfill God's intended design for the family by creating an environment that is safe and secure for raising children.

5. How did the disciples respond to the people bringing their children to Jesus?
v. 13

a. How did Jesus respond to the disciples? v. 14

b. *Personal:* Does *your* faith rise to the standard Jesus set in verse 15?

The Greek word for *blessed* (v.16) suggests fervency and continuance, meaning that Jesus took time with each child as He blessed them; He did not rush the process. The exuberance of these little ones was in great contrast to the stubbornness of the religious leaders and the hard-heartedness of the disciples. It is always the innocent ones with the child-like faith who bring Him the greatest joy!

Heartbeat . . . (Memory verse) "*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*" Mark 10:45

Day Two: With God All Things Are Possible

What to look for...

On His way out of town, Jesus is approached by a young man who asks a pivotal question about eternal life resulting in a life lesson for the disciples.

Read Mark 10:17–31

1. What can you determine about this man from your reading of the passage?
2. In confirming God's absolute goodness to the man, what message was Jesus sending?

After determining the man did not have an accurate understanding of God's goodness or how He gives eternal life, Jesus focused on six of the Ten Commandments that have to do with a person's relationships with others. The young man had kept all these commandments and felt secure in his accomplishment, yet Jesus pointed to what he still lacked.

3. How did Jesus feel about him? v. 21
 - a. What challenge did Jesus put forth to this young man?
 - b. The Lord's challenge exposed a love—greater than the man's love for God—that could potentially keep him out of the kingdom, what was it?
 - c. Would selling his possessions bring him eternal life? What would it prove?
 - d. This step of obedience was the first step in following Jesus. How did the man respond? Why?
4. What lesson did Jesus teach the disciples from this example? vv. 23–27
 - a. Did they understand? Who makes it possible?
5. Acting as spokesman for the disciples, Peter states that they had done what the rich young ruler was unwilling to do—left all to follow Jesus (v. 28). Matthew records Peter's question; what was it? See Matthew 19:27.

- a. What reward were they assured of according to Jesus? vv. 29–30
- b. Jesus leaves them with a warning about the heart attitude. What does He say? v. 31 What do His words mean to *you*?

Selah...

Jesus does not ask all of us to sell everything we own in order to follow Him, but He does ask all of us to get rid of everything in our lives that is more important to us than God. Is there anything you are unwilling to relinquish in order to follow Jesus Christ? If so, are you able to receive this word? How will you apply it?

The rewards in heaven are not based upon earthly standards. Those who desire to follow Christ and humbly serve others are the ones who will be recognized as great in heaven.

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Three: Be Careful What You Ask For!

What to look for...

Much of the Lord's time with His disciples was spent preparing them for His departure and their mission that would follow. For the third time Jesus predicts His impending death, only this time in graphic detail. As the disciples continue to vie for position, Jesus further expands on the teaching of greatness in the kingdom of God.

Looking closer...

Verses 32–34 give us a poignant but graphic picture of what will soon follow. After examining these verses, what facts stand out to you regarding each of the following . . .

- Jesus:
- The disciples:
- The details of His suffering:

1. Two of Jesus' disciples came to Him with a request. Who were they and what did they ask? vv. 35–37

Notice, even before they asked the question, they ask Jesus to promise to fulfill their request. Mark mentions the two disciples by name; Matthew 20:21 records their mother, Salome, making the request. Regardless of who actually uttered the words, mother and sons were in agreement.

2. What was the essence of Jesus' reply? v. 38

We can only imagine how difficult this moment must have been for Jesus, heading closer to His death while dealing with the self-centered requests of His closest followers. The *cup* He refers to is the *cup of His suffering* that He would have to drink in order to accomplish salvation on our behalf (see Mark 14:36). To drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism meant His followers would also have to partake of His sufferings.

- a. How did James and John reply to Him? vv. 39–40
 - b. Jesus explained that they would indeed be called upon to drink of His cup; but what was He unable to grant them? Why?
 - c. Why do you suppose the rest of the disciples were so indignant over what James and John had done?
3. Jesus called the disciples together and explained to them the difference between an earthly kingdom and God's kingdom. vv. 42–45
- a. How do the rulers and officials of earthly kingdoms treat their subjects?
 - b. In contrast, the one who desires to be great in Jesus' kingdom must do what?
 - c. What example would motivate the disciples to want to humbly serve others?

Jesus' teaching here is very clear: those who desire greatness will have to walk the path that is marked with suffering and be willing to serve others sacrificially.

4. *Personal:* Are *you* willing to walk the road that Jesus walked? Are *you* willing to give sacrificially to help others come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior? Please share your thoughts.

Day Four:

The Blind Beggar

What to look for...

The healing of a blind man is the final event leading up to the Passion Week in Jerusalem. Bartimaeus asks for mercy and in response to his faith receives his sight.

Read Mark 10:46–52

1. Where did Jesus encounter Bartimaeus? v. 47

- When he heard Jesus was coming, what did he do?

When ordered to be quiet, he cried out all the more, until Jesus heard him and called for him.

2. How did Bartimaeus respond when summoned? v. 50

- What does this tell you about Bartimaeus' faith?

Out of respect, he addressed Jesus as *Rabboni*, meaning *my dear master*. Jesus knew what he wanted, but asked him in order to give him the opportunity to express his faith.

3. What immediately happened? v. 52

- How does Bartimaeus respond?

There is no recorded mention that Jesus touched Bartimaeus, but rather that He spoke the healing into existence.

It's a fitting conclusion to the story that we read of Bartimaeus following Jesus. Picture it: our Servant Savior—on the road to the Cross—stopping on His way to heal the eyes of a blind man. Bartimaeus recognized he could do nothing to help himself, so he turned to the only one who could help him and, receiving his request, walks on down the road in glad surrender.

Up close and personal...

What is it that you need from the Lord today? Jesus asks, "*What do you want Me to do for you?*" Do you believe Jesus for the answer? Tell Him so . . .

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Five:

Praying God's Purpose

It's time to do some *prayer walking*—not in the literal, but the *spiritual* sense. The Holy Spirit will lead you today as you consider three points from your lesson, write them in the form of a prayer, and lift them to the Lord. If practicing the presence of God is new to you—be patient—it will come, and you will be blessed!

"... We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." Romans 8:26-27 NLT

A prayer for seeing marriage and divorce God's way . . .

Do you share God's viewpoint on marriage and divorce? This week have you realized any point in your perspective that needs a little adjustment? Tell God what it is.

A prayer for letting go . . .

What are you willing to sacrifice in order to follow Christ? Tell Him you believe that with Him all things are possible.

A prayer for understanding . . .

Is there anything about Jesus' teaching on *servanthood* that you still do not accept or understand? Ask Him to help you apply what limited understanding you have and to increase your capacity for more.

Write out this week's verse from memory:

Notes