

**Mark**  
**Chapter 10:1-16**  
**“God Is Always Right”**

**\*All scripture references are from the NASU unless otherwise noted\***

Calvary Chapel Fellowship of Enid  
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January 2010

**Announcement:**

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**Teaching:** Our last time together in the **Gospel of Mark**, we left with Jesus and His disciples still in Peter’s house there in Capernaum. And Jesus was in the midst of teaching His boys about relationships.

In **chapter 9**, He taught them about the relationship of man to God, the relationship of a child of God to other children of God and finally the relationship of believers to non-believers. All part of **“Discipleship 101”**. Things they were going to need to know ... things that we need to know.

So let’s tune in and see what else the Lord has to teach us ...

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**Verse 1:** This is the last time that Jesus will see His home base of Capernaum before His resurrection. He is now heading for Jerusalem and the cross. Although, as we’ll see, the Father has a few more divine appointments for Him on the way.

So He comes down on the East Side of the Jordan and heads south. Once again the location changes ... the scene changes ... the venue changes, but the Lord’s core ministry does not change ... He’s still teaching the people the Word of God as His first priority.

Now this area where the Lord and His disciples are traveling to is actually the area known as Perea. It lies between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea on the East Side of the Jordan. And although it’s not actually part of Judea proper, at the time it was all part of the land governed by Herod Antipas so it’s all lumped together under the title Judea. Today it’s the country of Jordan.

And again the Word describes the large crowds that followed the Lord and how the Lord was there to ministering to them. He’s there teaching and healing and blessing and then ... **verse 2** says ...

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**Verse 2:**

**Q. Isn’t that just like religion?** – The Lord is there carrying out the most powerful ministry of all history and along comes the religious people to shut it down.

And you know ... that has generally been my experience ... that religion, more often than

not, is merely a disruption to ministry as it was here.

Listen to how the Apostle Paul describes it ...

**2 Tim 3:2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.**

Paul says that despite all those evil attributes like reviling and gossiping and brutality, that they still **hold a form of godliness**.

**Q. What form?** – Religion. The Pharisees did and the Sadducees did and countless tens of thousands do today as well. It is far more common to find evil clothed as a sheep than it is to find evil called evil.

The Lord is there teaching the Word and healing people miraculously and the Pharisees come along, not seeking answers, but rather seeking an argument. They come “testing” Him.

And it’s a doozy of a test question too; “**Is it lawful for a man to divorce a wife?**”

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**Verses 3-9:** It’s no surprise, but this particular question was a hot topic of the time, because there were two well respected, but opposing teachers who had very different opinions on this matter and a heated division had occurred because of this.

It stemmed from the interpretation of ...

**Deut 24:1 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that 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 from his house, 2 and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife, 3 and if the latter husband turns against 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 husband dies who took her to be his wife, 4 then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.**

**Q. The big controversy was, what “indecency” in the wife would permit the husband to divorce her and send her away? What constituted “indecent”?**

And these two, well known Rabbis of Jesus’ day disagreed on the answer ... making it an

excellent “**test**” or “**trap**” for them to bring to Jesus.

One of those teachers was a very liberal Rabbi by the name Hillel (hil'-el). And he had put forth a lengthy list of acceptable reasons for a man to divorce his wife.

By the way, only men were legally permitted to file for divorce in the Israel of Christ's day so you'll notice that the text uses exclusively male pronouns.

But anyway ... here are a few of the reasons that a man could divorce his wife according to Rabbi Hillel (hil'-el) ...

1. If a man's wife said something against his parents (her in-laws). She was then considered unclean and he could divorce her according to Hillel's teachings.
2. If a man saw another woman fairer to look upon than his own wife, then his own wife was considered unclean by comparison and so divorce was justified.
3. If she did not prepare food that the husband enjoyed, then he could issue her a certificate of divorce because of that uncleanness.

And the list goes on ...

But on the other side of this debate was a more conservative rabbi named Shammai (sham'a-i). Shammai took a much more narrow view of divorce. He taught that the only allowable reason for divorce was “moral uncleanness“. And for him, “moral uncleanness“ came in two varieties:

1. If you discovered after you married your bride that she was not a virgin, that was considered “moral uncleanness“ and she could be divorced.
2. Or similarly if she was found to be sexually immoral during the marriage she could then be divorced as unclean.

So these Pharisees are essentially trying to trap Jesus by forcing Him to choose sides in this controversy.

And so the Lord's response here is so important. And not just the answer itself -- most of us know that divorce is contrary to God's plan. But what we must notice here is that the Pharisees say “OK Jesus, who are you going to side with -- Hillel or Shammai?” And the Lord's response is the same response that you and I are called to -- Neither. Rather than taking sides with any man, let's go to the word of God. Jesus quotes **Gen 2:24** ...

**Gen 2:24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.**

God brings a husband and wife together and since God doesn't make mistakes, divorce is

strictly a man-made thing. It is not of God ... even as Jesus says in **verse 9** here ...

**Mark 10:9 "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."**  
(emphasis added)

God joins people together in marriage ... not brides or grooms or judges or states or ministers, but God Himself.

And understanding that helps us to understand why the Lord says in **Malachi 2:16**; **"I hate divorce."**

NOT ... **"I hate divorced people"**, but **"I hate divorce ..."** because it undoes part of His perfect plan.

God hates divorce and would never ... NEVER advocate it. God's desire is that every marriage last forever, even in cases of adultery.

But as Jesus says here, in recognition of man's fallen nature and the hardening of his own heart, in cases of adultery ... divorce is allowed, but never advocated or smiled upon by God.

Jesus explains this more thoroughly in **Matthew 5:31-32** ...

**Matt 5:31 "It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE'; 32 but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery ; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.**

See the saying of that day was that it was wrong for a man to simply send his wife away because in that state she was still married and so could not remarry and would have been left without support. So the liberal people would pat each other on the back for doing the right thing in divorcing a wife that was no longer wanted for whatever reason.

But Jesus says **"No, there's only one reason and it still breaks God's heart."**

Some people struggle to see the difference between God's permissive and a perfect will, but divorce is a good example of this. God's perfect will is for a life-long, committed and joyful marriage, but His permissive will allows for divorce in the case of adultery for those who are too hard-hearted. It's still not God's best, but in that case it's not sin against Him.

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**Verses 10-12:** A couple of things:

**1.** I told you earlier that Jewish law did not allow a woman to divorce her husband and yet we have this reference in **verse 12** to just that; a woman divorcing her

husband.

**Q. So what's the deal?** – This is no doubt intended to give instruction, not to the Jew only, but also to the Gentile, because Roman law did allow a woman to divorce her husband in certain, specific cases.

**2.** Jesus puts forth a prohibition here (and it's repeated in a number of New Testament passages) and this prohibition deals with re-marriage after divorce.

And what it's saying is easy to understand, but very heavy to walk out ...

If you've been married and you are the one who divorced your spouse, then God is essentially saying that He does not recognize that divorce ... He still views you as married and therefore instructs you not to marry another person.

Now a couple of caveats:

**a.** This prohibition does not seem to apply to the one divorced, but to the one who divorces.

**b.** It is difficult to know with certainty how this is affected if adultery is what compelled the divorce.

**c.** It's also difficult to know how this is affected if the one you divorced gets re-married or dies since in such cases marital reconciliation is not possible.

**3.** Just because the law of man may recognize a piece of paper that says "divorced", that doesn't relieve a person of the necessity of sexual monogamy in God's eyes.

When it comes to marriage ... choose wisely and then make it work because divorce comes at a very stiff price and that price is a burden forever.

And one more thing on this ... because it's a very common question ... here's the scenario ... let's say that you got married when you were young and dumb and then you divorced that person before you became a Christian and now you're remarried and hearing these teachings from the Lord for the first time.

**Q. What should you do? Should you divorce your current spouse and pursue reconciliation with the one you divorced long ago?** – No, remember God hates divorce, so committing that act again doesn't sound like the way to please Him.

God's instruction here is that if you've previously divorced a spouse, then you are not to get remarried, but if you do ... the sum of the scriptures is that you stay that way ... forever this time.

It is the wedding, NOT the marriage that is sin. Once you're married -- stay that way whether it's marriage number one, two or seven.

So when your co-worker or neighbor asks you about God's view on divorce -- all of us should be able to say "He hates it no matter what the reason".

And for the person who's divorced a spouse (certainly in cases that did not involve adultery), God's counsel is that that person should either be reconciled to the one they divorced (assuming they're not dead or remarried), or they should stay single forever.

Before we leave this subject let me say to the singles here this morning; when you decide to get married -- don't buy into the world's philosophy of "well if it doesn't work out, you can always divorce." If you're a Christian -- divorce is not an option! You could say "well it is for adultery", but come on ... if you're actually worried about adultery at this juncture ... do yourself a favor and run away from that relationship as fast as you can right now. If you're a Christian -- divorce is not an option.

**Q. But what if you already have? What if you've already committed that sin?** –

Well then that would make you a sinner saved by the Grace of God just like everyone else. It's not that divorce is a more serious or grievous sin in God's eyes that any other sin (God assigns the same score to covetousness that He does to murder), and divorce is no different.

So the person who's committed the sin of divorce is just as forgiven and accepted as any other sinner in God's family.

Having said that however, there are few sins that come with a heavier price tag or longer-lasting consequences than divorce.

Well .... Moving on ... finally ...

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The Prophet Isaiah tells us that at a certain point in Jesus' earthly ministry; He "**set His face like flint**" as He pressed on toward His Father's will (**Isa 50:7**). He hardened His entire being and purpose to the task that was before Him ... the trip to Jerusalem, the cross and the salvation of you and me.

And although we don't have it spelled out for us here in black and white, I suspect that this is that point because we once again see a subtle shift in the Lord's ministry here. He seems more focused than ever and even a bit more intense and I think you'll see beginning here.

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**Verse 13:** So again we see parents doing what parents should do ... bringing their children to Jesus.

And just a side note on that ... the word “**they**” in this verse is the expressly masculine pronoun autos (ow-tos') which means that it was the fathers who were bringing their children. And based upon the use of the word paidion (pahee-dee'-on), these were toddlers who were out with dad for a time of fellowship with the Lord ... awesome!

And it was apparently also the fathers that the disciples rebuked ... “Jesus is busy. We're on a mission and can't be bothered right now with your little children. We've got important business to attend to.”

**Q. So how'd that go over?**

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**Verse 14:**

**Q. Don't you get a sense of the love that the Lord has for these children?**

In fact something is said here of Jesus that is not said of Him anywhere else in the scriptures. In the Greek it says that “He was aganakteo (ag-an-ak-teh'-o) with His disciples.”

It literally means to be so angry that it causes physical discomfort. Jesus was flat ticked with His disciples! I mean He was upset!

**Q. And why?** – Because they were hindering the little one's from coming to Him.

We should all take note .... And I think of all the people throughout history who've hindered children from coming to Jesus:

1. Unbelieving fathers
  2. Unbelieving mothers
  3. Madeline O'Hare who led the fight to ban prayer in schools
  4. Karl Marx
  5. Adolph Hitler
  6. And perhaps the most damaging of all ... the parent who claims Jesus as their Savior, but denies Him the lordship of their life.
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**Verses 15-16:** You know children are born believers. And they don't stop believing until some godless grownup lies to them.

Children may not understand much, but they know that God is and ...

**Q. Have you ever noticed how much fun they have compared to us?** – They just trust and enjoy and Jesus found them to be such a pleasure because of that.

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**Conclusion:** So this is sort of “Family Life Done God's Way” here.

The world says that a strong love for one another will make for a good marriage, but the

Word of God says that a good marriage will make for a strong love for one another. Just do the right thing and trust God.

And bring the children to Jesus regularly and frequently.

Simple, but right!