**THE TRUE MEANING OF MARRIAGE**

Mark 10:1-12

Key Verse 8, 9

and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

**Introduction**

 In today’s passage, Jesus teaches the Pharisees about the true meaning of marriage from Genesis. God created marriage in the Garden of Eden. Divorce is a sin against God’s sovereign will and purpose. We may wonder the reason why this passage is here in the midst of Jesus’ way to Jerusalem to be crucified. Jesus has come to this earth to recover a broken relationship due to sins. We can learn the real meaning of serving the most in the context of a marriage. We can choose to live as bachelors to avoid suffering. But as soon as we put wedding rings into our fingers, we begin to serve each other. That is why the apostle Paul called marriage as the mystery of God. Praise Jesus who created marriage to help us to learn how to serve a husband and a wife in Jesus’ name to glorify His name.

1. Read verses 1-5. What can we learn from Jesus who taught on the way to Jerusalem? (1) What did some Pharisees ask Him? (2) How did He help them with Moses’ laws? (3-5)

1-1, Read verses 1-5.

Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

3 “What did Moses command you?” he replied.

4 They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”

5 “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied.

1-2, What can we learn from Jesus who taught on the way to Jerusalem? (1)

***Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.***

* Jesus left Galilee and went to the region of Judea and across Jordan. Again, crowds of people came to him and he taught them the word of God.
* Although he faced his upcoming death, he welcomed the crowds and taught the word of God to them.
* To the last moment of his life on earth, Jesus taught the word of God to his disciples and to the crowds.
* Jesus knew that without the word of God, people would wander in darkness and sin. God’s word is essential to our life.
* God’s word not only reveals who God is, but also reveals who we are. Most of all, God’s word reveals the way of salvation.
* Jesus taught the crowds the word of God so that they might become wise for salvation through faith in Jesus and be equipped for every good work.

1-3, What did some Pharisees ask Him? (2)

***2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”***

* They came to Jesus and asked this question in order to test him. They asked this question to stir up trouble and to catch him saying something which would allow them to provoke a crisis and to put him to death. Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?

1-4, How did He help them with Moses’ laws? (3-5)

***3 “What did Moses command you?” he replied.***

***4 They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”***

* Since they asked about what is “lawful,” Jesus directed them to Moses, who received and passed on God’s law to the children of Abraham.
* Jesus took them to the word of God in the Old Testament. They said in verse 4. “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”
* They were quoting from Deuteronomy 24:1 that says, *“If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house…”*
* In this verse, two phrases, “a woman who becomes displeasing to him” and “something indecent about her” needed interpretation.
* In Jesus’ time, two different interpretations were widely held: one interpretation was that a man could divorce his wife if he found any indecency in her that displeased him.
* For example, if the wife made bad coffee, he could divorce her. Or if she was upset and talking back to him, he could divorce her. The other interpretation was that when the wife was found with irrevocable sins such as adultery or some other serious sins, he had legal rights for divorce.

***5 “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied.***

* But, the Pharisees misunderstood Moses’ heart and intention to permit divorce. No doubt, Moses didn’t encourage the Jews to divorce.
* Moses didn’t make a man easy to divorce his wife just with a certificate of divorce. Rather Moses gave that law to prevent divorce.
* Before this law was given, people divorced their wives randomly according to their sinful feelings and desires.
* But in that law, the husband had to go to the court and produce evidence to prove his wife’s indecency that displeased him and that deserved divorce.
* In reality, Moses made the law of divorce to prevent divorce and to protect women and help them to have proper status in their families and society.
* Fundamentally, Moses gave the law of divorce, because of their hard hearts. A hard heart is a self-righteous heart or an unforgiving heart.
* Divorce is the outcome of people’s hard hearts. Those who have hard hearts are very generous toward themselves, but very harsh and unforgiving toward others.
* They disregard God who has forgiven them with His mercy. If they knew God’s unfailing love for them, they should love, forgive, bear and serve others!
1. Read verses 6-9. What else did Jesus teach the Pharisees? (6-8) What does it mean to become one flesh? Why shouldn’t we divorce? (9)

2-1, Read verses 6-9.

6 “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24595a)] 7 ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24596b)] 8 and the two will become one flesh.’[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24597c)] So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

2-2, What else did Jesus teach the Pharisees? (6-8)

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* To teach about marriage, Jesus now goes back all the way to Genesis that Moses wrote about.
* Here Jesus helps us to know that marriage was God’s idea at the beginning of creation.
* God made a plan to create male and female in his own image. God first created Adam in His own image. Adam worked hard to take care of the world of God.
* But to God’s eyes, it was not good for Adam to be alone. So God made him fall into a deep sleep and made a woman out of his rib and brought her to Adam.
* From that time on, Adam thanked God for giving him a suitable helper. That was the first marriage in human history.

2-3, What does it mean to become one flesh?

* Since Eve came from Adam’s rib, they were one in origin. Through marriage, they became one flesh again.
* In marriage, two people become one flesh. It means that through marriage, a man and a woman get together and form a team in God and in their mission.
* But in reality two people becoming one flesh seems to be absolutely impossible. It is because each person’s character, weakness, or life-experience.
* Moreover, each person is sin-sick. That is why so many married couples cannot become one flesh but remain two freshes continually and end up with divorce.

2-4, Why shouldn’t we divorce? (9)

***9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”***



* God has joined a man and a woman together in marriage. The glue that holds the two together is the relationship that each spouse has with God.
* It is like a triangular relationship—God, husband and wife. We know that the strongest architectural structure is a triangular structure.
* But when a married couple have an intimate relationship with God, they can become one flesh in that triangular relationship.
* “What God has joined.” is a present perfect tense. It is considered to be the perfect will of God for both different people to be one unity.
* Married couples must recognize the facts that they are different and they should maintain their love relationship and they are in the long process of being one flesh requiring a lot of patience, forgiveness and commitment.
* That’s why Jesus suffered and died to serve sinful people like each of us. If each spouse repents our sins and accepts Jesus Christ, we are ready to be united.
* Through our marriage, we could see our selfishness, pride, hardheartedness and many other sins and I had to repent of them to build a godly family.
* We could also see things with two different views—my view and my wife’s view which broadened the spectrum of my life.
* In this way God has joined us together. I truly acknowledge God’s work to make us one flesh and mysterious harmony in my marriage.
* Praise God for his amazing work of joining us together. May the Lord help us to build up the kingdom of harmony in and through Jesus Christ.
* Marriage is also a God-thing. It is not a man and a woman agreeing to live together. It is a blessed binding agreement between the man and the woman.
* It is not just for their own happiness but to carry God’s holy mission as a team. When married couples acknowledge that God is the one who joined them together with his profound mystery and higher purpose.
* Since marriage is God’s work to have joined them together, therefore, their divorce is a sin of rebellion against God and his sanctioned work.
* In God, it is absolutely possible for the two persons to love each other deeply only when they love God and love each other as Jesus has loved and served them.
* That is why we don’t try to force our spouses to change or follow the principles that we think are the best. Instead of going ahead of the Holy Spirit, we trust God who knows the best way to heal and grow our spouses. May the Lord help us to grow as God’s good coworkers to keep up with every step with the Spirit.
1. Read verses 10-12. What did Jesus’ disciples ask Him? (10) What can we learn about marriage and divorce from His answers? (11-12) What can we learn from Jesus’ example as we live in this sinful and adulterous generation?

3-1, Read verses 10-12.

10 When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. 11 He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. 12 And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”

3-2, What did Jesus’ disciples ask Him? (10)

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3-3, What can we learn about marriage and divorce from His answers? (11-12)

***11 He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. 12 And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”***

* People explain the cause of their divorce with different excuses. But at the bottom of their hearts they divorce to commit adultery.
* Divorce happens because there is a possibility if he divorces he can marry another woman.
* Even if there are many women in the world, a husband should regard his wife as the only woman in the whole world.
* Even if there are many men in the world, a woman should regard her husband as the only man in the whole world.

3-4, What can we learn from Jesus’ example as we live in this sinful and adulterous generation?

 Personal reflection!

**Conclusion**

 Today, we learned the true meaning of marriage and the implication of divorce. Let all unmarried people among us accept Jesus’ words about marriage so that they can establish godly house-churches and God’s mission teams. And let all married people among us restore our love relationship with God and establish happy families and house church teams in God. In particular, we praise the Lord our God who created marriage for us so that we may learn how to serve our spouse to render glory to God.

**One word: One flesh!**