

## Daily Bible Study

### *“...let not man separate” Part - 1* *Mark 10:1 - 12*

*March 6 – March 12, 2011*

**THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY** –We return to our study of Mark’s gospel and pick up the text with a new chapter; **Mark 10**; and will be looking for the next two weeks specifically at **Mark 10:1-12**. The title of our lesson, “...let not man separate” which is taken from **verse 9** of our text provides us with the central point of focus concerning this teaching of Jesus on marriage. It is fair to say that in our society the traditional marriage vows with statements such as “for better or for worse” and “till death do us part” are very “politically incorrect”. They even seem puritanical and “old fashioned” by many individuals yet these statements find their origins in the plain teaching of marriage, love, and commitment taught us in Sacred scripture. Sadly, marriage is seen as something that can easily be “separated”, dissolved, or “gotten out of” if things don’t go as planned. It is necessary to say that divorce is a very emotional issue and unfortunately emotions sometimes overshadow and influence our understanding and application of God’s Word. There is probably not one of us reading this who have not experienced either immediately or be extension the painfulness of divorce in our families. We must remember the Gospel with all of its blessings of forgiveness and cleansing as we look at our lives, our sins, and the situations we have found ourselves in as fallen sinners. It is no secret to say that regarding marriage and divorce there are differing views among Christians of what Scripture commands and what God “allows” or doesn’t “allow”. In our text for the week, Jesus is challenged to answer some of these difficult questions regarding marriage and divorce so we will turn to His Words and by God’s grace learn from them. Read our text **Mark 10:1–12**: *“Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again. The Pharisees came and asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” testing Him. And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?” They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her.” And Jesus answered and said to them, “Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter. So He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”*

*(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?*

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*Suggestion for Prayer: Father God, teach me and feed me from Your Word this week. Help me to be humble as I study and hear the important truths You are saying to me through Sacred Scripture.*

**TUESDAY – Mark 10:1–2:** *“Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again. The Pharisees came and asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” testing Him.* As our text begins we see that there is a change of scenery if you will as Jesus arose from there (Capernaum -**Mark 9:33**) and enters the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. Without getting into specifics concerning the geography and some variant textual readings referring to Jesus’ movements it is safe to say that Jesus is starting on His final journey to Jerusalem and is closing in on Jerusalem for His most horrific, tortuous, and yet most glorious hour. We find the multitudes close in on Him as was the norm for Jesus and *as He was accustomed, He taught them again.* The parallel passage in **Matthew 19:2** informs us that Jesus was also healing the multitudes which have seen before often went hand in hand with His teaching. It is into this scene of Jesus healing and teaching that we find *...the Pharisees came and asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” testing Him.* Please notice the words *testing Him.* The Greek word *peirazo* can in a good sense mean “to prove” or in a bad sense “to tempt” which is the obvious meaning here. So much could be said here concerning this. There is also a lesson for us here with personal application. Do we come to Scripture and Jesus to test Him or listen to Him and submit? The Pharisees were constantly attempting to discredit Jesus, get Him in trouble and turn people against Him. Here in the region of Judea, an area under the control of Herod Antipas who had himself been involved in a double divorce and remarriage situation with Herodias they attempt to put Jesus on the spot. You will remember that John the Baptist had been imprisoned over this issue of challenging Herod with sinful behavior in his marriage and divorce and they seem to be hoping Jesus may end up with the same fate depending on His answer. On top of all that there was a difference of opinion among two rabbinical schools (Shammai, Hillel) of Jews concerning what constituted “legitimate” divorce according to their interpretation of **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**. As we continue we will find out how Jesus deals with this *testing* question.

*(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?*

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*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to never test You by prideful attitudes or actions of unwilling submission to Your Word. Thanks for Scripture & The Spirit which grow me in Christ.*

**WEDNESDAY – Mark 10:2–5:** *“The Pharisees came and asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” testing Him. And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?” They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her.” And Jesus answered and said to them, “Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.* Before we look at the contextual issues of the day concerning the people asking and listening to this conversation, let’s focus today on the very first part of the Pharisees question. We established that they were there to discredit and undermine Jesus and not find a real answer to their

“inquiry”. They ask Jesus, *Is it lawful...* The Greek word for lawful means “permit, or allow” and they are asking if there is permission granted for a man to divorce his wife, and what is that permission and or allowance. We then find Jesus first taking them to the place they apparently wanted to go to...the Law of Moses. As we will see in more detail later in the text Jesus was not going to stop at the law in Deuteronomy in His answer but because they wanted to base their argument there, He goes there. *What did Moses command you?* The Pharisees respond with *“Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her.”* They were correct in their answer concerning Moses but what Jesus then goes on to show them is that this “permission” was not the command of God but rather an allowance by God to let Moses regulate if you will the sinfulness of this people in this matter of marriage and divorce. We will see that Jesus informed them, *“but from the beginning it was not so” (Matthew 19:8)*. This *certificate of divorce* was not God’s plan for marriage but was simply a way He had Moses limit the effects of human sinfulness in a governed people. Another way we see this point illustrated is in Jesus words, *“Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.”* He is saying that it is because of human rebellion and sin against the Divine ideal that this “permission” was granted. Let’s be clear; Moses did not command or encourage divorce, he merely permitted it and that through a governed system which in itself gave time for the hopeful reconciliation and protection of parties who were being sinned against. This *certificate of divorce* process even gave time to a process that before having any instrument of regulation could be done at a mere word of a disgruntled husband. Oh, how we should give thanks for a patient marriage partner such as Jesus who bears with us in spite of our sin.

*(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?*

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*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for being so patient with me even when I sin against You. Help me to be more faithful and obedient to You my covenant Lord.*

**THURSDAY** – As I mentioned, there were at least two conflicting schools of thought concerning divorce among the Jews stemming from their interpretation of **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**. That text says, *“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 uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man’s wife, if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after 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 is giving you as an inheritance.”* Earlier we mentioned the two different Rabbinic schools of thought concerning this issue of divorce; they were Shammai and Hillel. The one school, the followers of Shammai interpreted the phrase *finds no favor in his eyes* in **Deuteronomy 24:1** to refer to unchastity or adultery. They saw it referring to a serious offense of a sexual nature and that was the ground the stood on to say a man was allowed to divorce his wife.

The school of Hillel on the other hand had a much more liberal view and interpretation of *finds no favor in his eyes* and broadened that phrase to include such things as serving bad dinner, talking to loudly, not being as pretty as another lady, etc... Needless to say, they had many followers and adherents of their interpretation and little tolerance or recognition of forgiveness and patience. So when the question came to Jesus from the Pharisees, understand they were coming with their own viewpoints established already; this was a *testing*. If they could get the Lord to “choose sides” between these views He would be forced to alienate someone and surely He would anger some people. The Lord Jesus masterfully illustrates to them that the question is wrong, making an assumption that is fundamentally wrong. Why the talk about divorce and its possibilities and allowances? It presupposes a mindset of “If this doesn’t work out I can always get a divorce”. Jesus now goes pre-Moses and arrives at creation to establish God’s view of marriage.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

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Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, thank You that one day paradise will be restored and I will live with You in a new glorified sinless body in a new heaven and earth.*

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY** – **Mark 10:6–9:** “*But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.*” Jesus now goes to a higher court than that of Moses and marriage legislation of **Deuteronomy 24** as He quotes 2 important passages from Genesis. **Genesis 1:27:** “*So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*” & **Genesis 2:24:** “*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*” Read and meditate on them. These two passages contain a wealth of wisdom and insight into this matter of divorce and what God believes about marriage and we will Lord willing dive into them further next week.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

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Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, thank You for the wonderful plan of and picture seen in marriage.*