

Oh, good morning church family,  
how are you? Everybody good? Being cheery? Yeah, that wasn't  
as cheery as I would hope. How are you guys? Doing good?  
All right, good deal. Mark chapter 10, turn to Mark  
chapter 10 for me. Mark chapter 10, we're embarking  
on a new chapter in Mark as we continue to move towards the  
passion of Jesus. Mark 10, verses 1-12. The title  
of the message today is, What God Establishes. What God Establishes.  
Mark 10, verses 1-12. Once you've  
found the passage, if you would stand with me in honor of the  
one who gave us this word for our initial reading of our passage  
together. Mark 10, verses 1-12 reads, And  
standing up, he went from there to the region of Judea and beyond  
the Jordan. Crowds gathered around him again,  
and according to his custom, he once more began to teach them.  
And some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing him, and began  
to question him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a  
wife. And he answered and said to them,  
What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses permitted  
a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.  
But Jesus said to them, because of your hardness of heart, he  
wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation,  
God made them male and female. For this reason, the man shall  
leave his father and mother and the two shall become one flesh.  
So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God  
has joined together, let no man separate. And in the house, the  
disciples began questioning him about this again. And he said  
to them, whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman  
commits adultery against her. And if she herself divorces her  
husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery. This  
is the word of the Lord. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father,  
we are so thankful for the opportunity to come together this morning  
to examine this passage as a body. We do pray, Lord, that you would  
admonish our hearts where they need admonishing, Edify us where  
we need to be edified, Lord. Encourage us to look to you and  
to glorify you in all that we do. I do pray for myself, Lord,  
that you would remove all hindrances, nerves, slips of the tongue,  
or anything else that would be distracting from the purity of  
your word, and that I would simply be a vessel by which you speak  
to your body this morning. We love you and praise you and  
ask you for all this, in Jesus' name, amen. You can be seated. All  
right, so over the last few  
weeks, we've been moving forward from Mark chapter eight. And  
we talked about in Mark chapter eight, there was a distinct pivot  
in the focus of Jesus's ministry. So once he has proclaimed himself  
as Christ, as the Christ and explained his passion, he's begun  
to explain his passion multiple times now, we've seen it a couple  
of times. And he's been on a overarching theme of discipleship and  
servanthood. discipleship, and servanthood. And this next chapter,  
chapter

10, will take us along that same path. This next chapter now gets into the weeds, if you will, or more practical steps when it comes to discipleship. We'll see things about marriage, we'll see things about children, we'll see things about possessions. So he's moving on into more specifics, and as Mark often does, he records

Jesus' teachings for us, not in his sermons or teachings to the crowd in general, but in specific conversations with people, or his specific actions. And so we're going to see the same thing continuing through Mark chapter 10, just with more detailed practical application for us as disciples and servants. So as we enter this chapter, we're going to see him traveling through Judea, so he's continuing on his trek going towards Jerusalem, his ultimate destination. And on the way here, he's going to begin to open the eyes of the disciples on what it looks like to practically, in more application, be his disciples. Now in the first passage, we're

going to dive into something. So in the text that we have today, we're going to dive into something that was of great debate and controversy in the day of Jesus. And just like it's in great debate and controversy today, marriage and divorce. marriage and divorce, a huge controversy in the day of Jesus and a huge controversy and debate, topic of debate today. So it's absolutely applicable and I do hope that my prayer is that we can see the teachings of Jesus here in light of discipleship and what it means to be married in the eyes of God and the covenant that he established at creation. Now in order for us to understand this teaching, before we dig in, we have to understand how the Jews of Jesus' day viewed marriage. The Jews of Jesus' day did not

view it as a covenant of equals established by God, male and female. They absolutely saw it as the husband having the ultimate right and the wife having really no rights at all. You'll see this come to light more as we go through there, through the text this morning. But the main purpose of marriage was not a unifying bond to glorify God or one of discipleship. The main point in the Jewish culture was to extend the family.

Childbearing was the main point of marriage for the Jewish culture. And the worst possible outcome of a marriage was actually childlessness. So to avoid childlessness at all costs was the ultimate goal. You'll see this more as we talk through the rise of divorce and the teachings of the different sects within Judaism. But in this particular text that we're going to see today, the context about marriage, and I want you to lodge this firmly in your mind as we go through here, the context of Jesus teaching about marriage is underlying the overarching theme of discipleship. So he is going to teach us about

being disciples within our marriage. Because the marriage vow ultimately is a lifelong vow of obedience to him. It's a lifelong vow and

commitment of obedience. We're committing to our spouses, of course, but ultimately it's a lifelong vow and commitment before God in obedience to Him. So let's look at what God says about marriage, what God says about divorce, and look ultimately to the authority of Scripture, not to the culture around us. So let's dig in. Number one, the test. Number one is the test, verses one through four. So the Pharisees are going to come first. Let's look at what they say. Chapter 10 in verse one reads, and standing up, he went from there to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan. Crowds gathered around him again, and according to his custom, he once more began to teach them. And some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing him, and began to question him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife. And he answered and said to them, what did Moses command you? And they said, Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away. So as you recall from our last week's text, Jesus was sitting in a house in Capernaum and he was teaching and he had brought a child onto his lap and explained what servanthood looked like and talked about salting with fire and those kinds of things. So after teaching in this kind of environment, Mark 10 in his normal, very concise, fast-paced fashion said, he got up from there and went to Judea. So he left the house in Capernaum and on he traveled to Judea. And as he was traveling, of course, Jerusalem looms on the horizon, and so we're looking at him marching ever forward to the culmination, the climax of his mission, which was to sacrifice himself for his people. Now, as was usual in this area, because he's ministered here before, as soon as people knew he was there, a crowd gathered. So we see in verse 1, the crowd gathers very quickly, and he begins to teach them. Now notice that Mark does not record what Jesus was teaching. That's pretty normal for Mark. He doesn't record Jesus' teaching in a lot of detail. But what he does record is the test. He records that Jesus immediately starts facing opposition again once he's back in a heavy Jewish area. And so as they come up to him, they wanted to test him. And remember the antagonism, we've talked about the word testing. It's got a mindset of warfare with it in the original language. So this testing of him was them coming to challenge him and what he was doing and what he was teaching. Now again, we don't know the context of what he was teaching. It could be things about the law, we don't know. But the Pharisees came up specifically to challenge him. And there's a couple motivations that I want to bring to you that I think would shine some light in this particular text. So if you remember back whenever we talked about John the Baptist, John the Baptist was put to death by who? Do you guys remember? Herod, Herod Agrippa specifically. Jesus has been avoiding, as we've seen Mark throughout, Jesus has been avoiding the territory of

Herod for quite some time now. He went up to the Gentile regions, came down, did a lot of ministry in the Gentiles, and so for weeks he's been avoiding Herod Agrippa's territory, but now he's back in the territory of Herod Agrippa, and the first thing the Pharisees want to test him on is his opinion of divorce. Now if you recall, John was taken to prison and ultimately beheaded for what reason? For calling out the divorce and remarriage of Herod's wife to himself. And John ultimately got beheaded.

Now, if you were a pious, good, law-following Jew, and you could get the Romans to do your dirty work for you, that seems like a win-win, doesn't it? So now that Jesus is back under Herod Agrippa's territory, under his authority, if they ask him what his views on marriage are, and he teaches clearly what the scriptures say, which is what John stood for, which was, Herod married a divorced woman, was adultery, and was not allowed by God's law, it makes sense that the Pharisees are looking with a political motivation, hoping that Herod would get wind of the same teaching from Jesus, and ultimately take him and behead him too. It'd be a win-win. Now, the text doesn't specifically say what their motivations are, I'm just offering you what makes sense in the cultural context and where Jesus is now. Why was this the question that they wanted to talk to him about? What sense does it make to ask, out of all the things they could ask from the law, why did they ask about divorce? Well, when you understand where he is in the context of whose authority Jesus would be under, and their goal ultimately to be rid of him, because you remember, the Pharisees have already made the decision they need to get rid of him. By whatever means necessary, they want Jesus gone. So it makes perfect sense that their motivation would be to get Herod upset with Jesus so that the Romans would do the dirty work of the religious leaders of the Jews. Now in Matthew, here in Mark, we don't see this specific question. It just says in some Pharisees in verse 2 of chapter 10, it says, some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing him, and began to question him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife. But the good news is, Matthew gives us the full question. Matthew 19 in verse 3 gives us the full question in his account. Matthew records, and some Pharisees came to Jesus testing him and saying, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all? For any reason at all. And those last few words are so wildly important, because in Deuteronomy, that we'll talk about here in a few moments, God does give a concession and allows for divorce because of a sinful world, a sin broken world. And he does allow a concession there, but it's not for the reason that the Pharisees use it for. And again, we'll talk more about that as we go through. But the specific question they're asking is, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all? Now, why is this such

an important question? Why do those words become so vitally important to the discussion. Well, there was two schools of thought in Jewish culture. There was a more conservative view in teaching, and there was a more liberal view of teaching. The school of Shammai, which was the more conservative, said that a man could divorce his wife if he found unchastity in her. In other words, if there was sexual sin. And they interpreted the words of Deuteronomy chapter 24, where it speaks about indecency in her, to be unfaithfulness to the marriage bed. But the other liberal and more widely accepted interpretation was the school of Hillel. And in the school of Hillel, the Jewish teaching was that a man could divorce his wife for anything he deemed unacceptable to himself. In the actual writings of the school of Hillel, it was if a dish was spoiled and not cooked to your liking, you could divorce your wife. In the school of Hillel, if you found that her looks did not keep up pace with what you liked, and there was someone fairer, you could divorce your wife. Any indecency whatsoever. So, indecency was given this broad interpretation, so Deuteronomy 24, which we'll look at in a moment, it was given this very liberal, broad, basically do whatever you want to do mentality, and divorce suddenly became open for anyone for any reason. Does that sound like a culture that you're used to? Suddenly there's no fault divorce, there's no issue. You can just suddenly get bored and file for divorce for any reason. And so the Pharisees come up to ask him this very specific question. And as the Jews often did in the first century, as we've seen in Mark throughout multiple confrontations with the Pharisees, they interpret the law to their own benefit, to fit their own mentalities of what their desires were. Now if you would, turn to Deuteronomy chapter 24. I want you to read what the original permission, the concession was that God allowed Moses to put forth. Deuteronomy chapter 24, verses one through four. But the overall context, while you're turning there, I want you to remember is the Jewish culture overall accepted that divorce could be made by the man primarily for any reason that he deemed worthy. Anything that he could argue was indecent. Deuteronomy chapter 24, verses one through four. Here's the reading of the law that they are referencing. If 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. And she goes out of his house and goes and becomes another man's wife. 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, 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

Yahweh, and ye shall not bring sin on the land which Yahweh your God gives you. as an inheritance. Now, when you think about indecency and you think about the law, indecency is almost always ascribed to sexual sin. It's a perversion, indecency, those kinds of things, and that's the generally accepted interpretation of Deuteronomy 24. But the point of the Pharisees, I want you to hear here, the point is that the Pharisees are twisting the Word of God to fit their own agendas. Because the true intent of the passage, quote, is to limit sinfulness and to control its consequences. Deuteronomy 24 was, because of the hardness of the heart of the Israelites at that time, rejecting the creation order, which we'll look at the creation order in just a moment, But the Israelites rejected the creation order and were simply dismissing each other in their marriages for whatever reason they could come up with, and to protect those who were being dismissed with no valid reason and to protect those who were in relationships with very sinful people, God allowed a concession in Deuteronomy 24 of how a divorce should work out. A concession is not the same as the original intent. And we see often, God's original intent is not what we deal with today, correct? Because of sin. In a sin-broken world, that's not what we deal with today. So concessions have to be made, and God in His grace and sovereignty allows that to happen. But the point of Deuteronomy chapter 24 was not to allow a limitless devil may care kind of mentality when it comes to divorce, that you can simply dismiss your wife for any reason you wanted to. In fact, Deuteronomy 24 was there to protect the women because in Jewish culture in Israel's day, the woman had no real rights. A man could just get tired of her and say, nope, I'm done with you and move on to someone else. And then she was by herself because the only way a woman in Jewish culture could function is by her association to a man, whether it be a father, husband, brother, She was really only seen in status in the culture in relation to a man. So the essence of hard-heartedness, because Jesus answers them, In just a moment, we'll see him talk about the hardness of the heart. The essence of hard-heartedness is when one completely ignores the clearly established ordinance of God at creation to embellish one's own sinful desires. Ultimately, what they have done, because Jesus simply asks in verse three, what did Moses command you? Well, Moses isn't just the book of Deuteronomy. Moses is how many books? Five. So does that mean Genesis is also considered the writings of Moses? Yes, absolutely. And instead of looking to Genesis chapter 1, 2, and 3 to see the establishment of creation in the creation order as God intended marriage to be before Adam's fall, they jump to the end game of what happens when sin impacts a marriage and decided to generalize and place that caveat as the

important piece about marriage. They completely ignored the idea of Scripture interpreting Scripture, which we'll see Jesus will do here in just a moment. So as they continue their conversation, the Pharisees reply, obviously as we've talked about, verse 4, Moses permitted the man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away. As we looked at, that is the Deuteronomy chapter 24 passage. But I want to remind you, a text of concession is not a text of intention. That's a very important quote. A text of concession is not a text of intention. Keep that in mind as we move forward. So on this first point, our application is we must, must guard against reading the Word of God to fit our preconceived wants and desires from the flesh. Because that's ultimately what the Pharisees have done. They have taken a teaching of God, a concession, a law of God, meant for a very specific set of circumstances, and they have broadened it to fit their own humanistic ideas of what they want to do in life. How often do we read a text with a preconceived idea of what we want it to say? can be challenging sometimes, can't it? When you go into a text with the mindset of, I want to do this in my life, I really hope God lets me do this, and you start flipping, trying to find something to back up what you want to do. Is that how we, those who have been able to attend our hermeneutics class, is that how we approach scripture? Is that eisegesis or exegesis? Pop quiz for my Hermeneus class. That's eisegesis, right? When you insert your meaning into the text instead of extracting the text's meaning out and applying it to your life, we must guard against twisting the Word of God to fit our preconceived desires. We must look at Scripture as a whole and interpret Scripture with Scripture. He asked about Moses. Moses has written Genesis, but they went to the text that they could flex and twist and distort to fit their own desires. We must look at the authority of Scripture as the Word of God, taking it as one whole book that impacts our life from there. Number two, the answer. So the test has been laid out. The test is laid out, the Pharisees have made the challenge, now Jesus is going to answer them, verse five through nine. Mark chapter 10, verses five through nine reads, but Jesus said to them, because of your hardness of heart, He wrote for you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh, so they are no longer two, but one flesh. But therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." So now Jesus is going to reply to their answer. He does his normal reply first. They ask him a question. He asks them a question back. They've answered. and now he's gonna give them

the truth. And it was only because of Israel's hardness of heart that Moses, and ultimately God, allowed the concession that we saw in the law, and we've talked about that a little bit, but the hardness of heart of Israel at the time of that law being written was they did not want to look at how the creator intended marriage to be at creation, they wanted to twist it to make it fit their own situation. Now I want to ask you a question. Are there sinners in a marriage? Everyone resoundingly, anyone married in here better shake your head yes. Do sinners sin in marriage? Also a resounding yes. So it makes sense that God in His sovereignty would allow a concession by grace

to protect those who might be innocent victims of a sinful spouse who sins against them to the point of sending them away. But Jesus does not look at the concession or the design of marriage. He looks at the Creator for the design of marriage. He doesn't look at how sin impacts marriage and makes a decision, he looks back at the Creator to say, this is how it's intended, this is our ultimate goal. Yes, sin is going to impact it, but our ultimate goal is to view marriage as the Creator established it to be. It's like if you were going to fly an airplane, would your first stop in flying an airplane, learning to fly, be to study how to crash land? That makes no sense. You don't start at the worst possible situation, a concession that you have to know how to do if once you're an experienced pilot. No, you study how the original designer intended the plane to be flown, and you study how to fly. And then if you have to have a crash landing, then you study how to have a crash landing. Or if you've been in the military, do you begin to prepare for a battle by studying how to retreat? No, you don't start with a concession

with something that may have to happen. You begin preparing for the battle by the tactics and strategies of the enemy, and you move forward there. This is the same thing the Pharisees are doing. They are looking at the concession to decide how the entire marriage should be lived out, instead of looking to what the Creator intended it to be in the first place. And so Jesus pulls their attention back where it should be, and he quotes Genesis chapter 1 and verse 27, and Genesis chapter 2 and 24. So he's bringing them all the way back to the very beginning, and he applies a very important hermeneutical process. He interprets scripture with scripture. So he says, yes, Deuteronomy 24 is here. Deuteronomy 24 is absolutely here, but we interpret Deuteronomy 24 in light of Scripture as a whole, and Scripture as a whole has the Creator showing us that marriage was instituted by Him, a covenant laid down by Him, and we're gonna see why that covenant's so important shortly, but we have to interpret Scripture with Scripture. And so Jesus



snaps them back to attention by bringing them back to where they should have been looking the entire time, which was that God intended man, excuse me, created man in His own image. In the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Now what's interesting is, He brings it back to the creation itself of male and female. Jesus could have just quoted Genesis 2.24 and handled the issue of marriage, couldn't he? But he takes it back to the creation order as well. Because another thing that he is doing is teaching and pushing back against, teaching against their distorted view of marriage as a whole. Because in Jewish culture, they had a very distorted view of marriage. Only the husband was in view in Jewish culture. He could do as he pleased with his wife, up to and including divorcing her for a burned meal. Now when God created male and female, he created them as two creatures of equal value. Correct? He didn't create them as subservient, a woman, as subservient value to the man. Is there authoritative roles in those kinds of things? Yes. Are there roles in the marriage? Yes. We're not going into how a marriage is designed to function. We're simply looking at the created order, which was that male and female were created by God with equal value in His eyes. He breathed the breath of life into both of them. So he's pushing back, the reason why he brought in the created order is because he's pushing back against the Jewish view of marriage overall. And by quoting Genesis chapter 2 and verse 24, he's also pushing back against something that was prevalent in Jewish culture, which was that the man forsook his wife for the sake of his father and mother. It was a very culturally normal thing, but the priority in a man's life was actually his parents, not his wife. And so Jesus is not only correcting their view of divorce, their distortion of the law of one facet of a concession, their poor interpretive skills, but he's also correcting their overall view of marriage, of how God intended it, which was in Genesis 2.24, the man was supposed to leave his father and mother, cleave to his wife, and become one flesh. And so he's correcting all kinds of skewed views of marriage in the Jewish culture by quoting simply the creation order. And so what he's trying to do is shift the power in the minds of the Jews. He's trying to shift the power of marriage from being all for the man and to bring it up to equal value within the marriage. And we'll look more here in a moment as to why that's true in our next point. But I want us to grasp and understand that our marriages are defined by God. Our relationship as a husband and wife is defined by God and God alone. Marriage is for one

man and one woman for one life. I'm sure we've all heard that statement. But we have to look to the authority of the Creator who created things exactly how He intended for us to understand how we should be disciples within our relationship. Because both husband and wife are to follow His design for marriage. Do you know that the goal of your marriage is not to be a good husband for your wife? Men? Your goal of being a good husband is for the glory of God. Wives, did you know your goal for being a good wife is not for your husband? The goal of being a good wife is for the glory of God. Because your marriage is not just you and your wife, your marriage is your wife, you and your wife before God. And wives, same with your husbands. And so today in today's culture, in Jewish culture, just like today, we have a skewed view of marriage, don't we? We have a flippant view of commitment. We have a flippant view of covenant. And so we, in our culture today, just as the Jews did in Jesus's day, we see marriage as a game, culturally. It's nothing different than dating with a piece of paper, isn't it? Because you can get the divorce just as easily. You can sign the marriage license. I mean, it may cost you a little bit, but you can do it. And so it becomes dating with a piece of paper. But as God's design for marriage, we are to be one flesh in union that glorifies Him in how our marriage operates. Because marriage is designed for our good, but ultimately for God's glory. Because ultimately what God does in the New Testament is use the marriage covenant to describe what? Are your minds already there, I hope? the covenant relationship of Christ and the church. God instituted marriage for a very specific reason, and it goes way beyond making children, or pleasure, or having companionship. Those are all amazing things that by God's grace we get to partake in because of the covenant of marriage. But the covenant of marriage is by God's design to show us how his son would love his church. That's the point of marriage. And so when we distort and take away from that, we have cheapened the gift that God has given us to display his love for his church. So when we remove God as the central focus of our marriages, and we look to the world, pop psychology, social media moguls, or some recent self-help book that's selling very popularly, we cheapen the very gift that God gave us so that we as humans in our finite minds could somewhat grasp the covenant relationship that he brings to us through Christ. Because I can tell you, I would not grasp God's love for me found in Christ if it weren't for the example of marriage. Would anybody else agree? Like our finite minds, God is so gracious to give us a gift to understand his love for the church, plus we get all the perks of companionship, Glorifying God, having children, the pleasure that marriage brings. How gracious God is to give us this covenant. And what we're called to be is disciples within that relationship. I've said it many times, the most sanctifying relationship on the face of this

planet is a marriage. God does more to change a spouse through their spouse than he does in any other relationship. What a gracious gift that is.

But we have so cheapened it and taken away from it and distorted it and made it to fit our own personal hedonistic humanistic mentalities and fleshly desires that we have lost the beauty of what God has given us. And so I want us to understand

As Jesus says here, divorce is not an option. Now, before your head starts spinning and you start flipping through your Bible to the New Testament and look for the concessions that we see there, because there are concessions in the New Testament as well, aren't there? Because we live in a sin-broken world. But what Jesus is very clearly saying is divorce should be the absolute last option for gross sin when forgiveness cannot be found by the offended spouse. But hear me when I say that.

Divorce should not be an option on the table for a Christian couple outside of very specific guidelines laid out in Scripture. It shouldn't even be in the vocabulary of a married couple. It's not an option. God instituted it, the Creator instituted it, it's not an option for a married couple outside of very specific, clear, black ink on white paper guidelines laid out in the New Testament. And God was gracious to allow

that. Because sometimes in sin, a believer will marry someone that's unconverted, And the unconverted spouse sins,

commits adultery, physical abuse, those types of things. And God allows there to be a concession for abandonment. But I want us to understand that if a spouse sins in a Christian relationship, the goal is reconciliation. If a spouse commits adultery against their spouse, and the offender repents, asks for forgiveness, wants to come back, the offended, Lord willing and by His grace, will be able to forgive the offender and reconcile the marriage so that God, by His grace, will get the glory for reconciling a broken marriage. We must fight in the church to

protect the covenant of marriage. And it's hard, because as I said earlier, are there sinners in marriage? Yes. Do sinners sin against the other sinner in marriage? Yes. And then the other sinner retaliates by sinning against the first sinner? Yes. It happens, right? All of my, all the married couples

in here, I hope are going, yep, done that, been there. I have a t-shirt. But the goal, the ultimate command by the Creator Himself, by instituting it in the creation order itself,

at the very beginning, speaking it into existence, showing us the example of what He said, says, this is sacred before Me. Because it's sacred before Him,

we don't look to a concession as a way out. We look to the creation order and strive for Him. So let us not let the distortion become the normalcy. Let us not let the world tell us that if you're just unhappy, to just find the true love of

your life. Follow your heart. Don't ever follow that little colloquialism. Don't ever follow your heart and your flesh. The heart is wicked, deceitful. But as married couples, I pray that it's sinking in, that our union is not for us, it's not for our spouse, it is for the glory of God. And that you fight for the glory of God, even when the sinner that's married to you sins against you. And again, there's concessions for a reason. God is gracious and allows certain situations and circumstances to impact us. When reconciliation can't be done and the circumstances are lined out with Scripture, divorce for those reasons would not be a sin. But anything short of that, the very specific guidelines of the New Testament, divorce is a sin, and if you remarry after that, you're committing adultery. So we've looked at the test. We've looked at the answer, now we're gonna look at the application. Because as Jesus so often does, he takes his disciples, the inner circle, to give them a little bit more. So the application, verses 10 through 12. Mark chapter 10, verses 10 through 12 reads, and in the house the disciples begin questioning him about this again. And he said to them, whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery. So they're back in the house, we don't know which house, there's no way to know for sure where they're staying. But he brings his inner circle back into a house and we know through Mark over and over again when he brings them to a house or to a secluded area, he's about to teach the disciples something special. Something that the crowd didn't get or gets to understand. And he goes on to say, whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery. So now as we approach the application, we have to think in the mindset of a Jewish culture once again. In those days, adultery by a man was not committed against his spouse. And the letter of the Mishnah, the letter of the law, the interpretation of the law, the man who committed adultery, committed adultery not against his spouse, he didn't offend her, but he offended either her father or her brother, the last male relative of hers. The offense was not against her, he simply offended the father or the brother. So the woman did not have enough status in the Jewish culture of equal value to the man to even be able to be the offended party of adultery by the male spouse. And women the circles of Judaism that allowed for divorce. There are some that say that women weren't allowed to divorce at all. Historically, that's not correct. There are specific writings about examples of women being able to get a divorce. In fact, there's a parchment from the first century where there's still a parchment

available where a woman wrote a certificate of divorce to her husband, so it was practiced in some venues of Judaism, although not nearly as widely accepted as the man being able to divorce his wife for whatever reason he came up with. But what Jesus is here is doing

is taking it a step further and re- not re-establishing, off my mind, losing words guys, so he's emphasizing, there it is, found it. It was in there rolling around somewhere. So he's emphasizing at a greater degree the fact that husband and wife are of equal value. Because if the husband sins and

divorces and commits adultery, it's against his wife. It's no longer against the father or the brother, it's against her.

And if a woman now has equal value to a man because she can divorce, he recognizes that and says that if she divorces and marries another man, she's committing adultery against him. And so he's leveling the playing field against the Jewish culture that raised the level of the male and value above the female. And so he's once again bringing it back to the disciples in a more applicable, real in-your-face way that the creation order is what determines the marriage covenant. Now when we think through the Jewish view of the law, and all that we've seen culturally from the Jews of that day, do you see the flippant view that they had of the covenant that God had implemented? and instituted that creation. You can't miss it. When you understand

the Jewish culture, you understand them taking the law of God, the creation order, and distorting it to fit their own desires. But we instead, as believers, must understand that our goal

in marriage is to glorify God through discipleship. We are to follow God's commands, and they're lined out for us in Scripture.

The only authority that we need for how we are to live in our marriages is in the Bible. Ephesians gives us great detail on this. There's multiple epistles in

the New Testament that explains to us how we are to live with our husbands and wives. But did you know, fellow believer, that it's not the specific texts about husband and wife that tell us all we need to know about how to live in our marriages?

Do you know that as a believer, everything else that applies to how Christians relate to other Christians applies most prominently to your spouse? Who's your closest neighbor?

You guys remember my favorite passage in the whole Bible? Matthew 22, 36 through 40. And in it, the Pharisees asked

Jesus, what are the two greatest commandments? to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself. Let me ask you in here, married person, who is your closest neighbor? Someone answer me, please.

Spouse,

thank you. Your spouse is your closest neighbor.

So you are to love your spouse more than yourself. So the very foundation of who

we are as believers applies to our spouse first. All we need

for having a happy, healthy marriage is found in Scripture. And the central focus has to be on God. It doesn't have to be on Facebook groups. It doesn't have to be on Twitter or X groups, whatever it's called now. It doesn't have to be on YouTube channels. It doesn't have to have all the extra baggage. Everything we need to have a happy, healthy marriage is found in Scripture. And I can tell you from personal experience, and we're not perfect at it at all, but a great shift in our marriage is when God convicted my wife and I that we were doing things for each other instead of for Christ. Because when you do things for Christ as the foundation of what you're doing, and doing it for His glory, it no longer becomes a heavy task to serve your spouse. Again, not perfect. She'll raise her hand and say, Josh is not perfect, I promise, go ask her after the sermon. But a huge shift in a marriage relationship is putting Christ back as the focus because ultimately what we are before husbands and wives are disciples of Christ. If that becomes our priority, then serving your spouse becomes simply an act of glorifying the one that saved you. and it changes the whole motivation, it shifts the whole focus. And so Jesus's entire teaching here under discipleship is taking us back to the creation order, showing us the covenant that God put in place so that we could see his and understand better his gracious love for his church when he sent his son, and all the benefits that we have by his grace of being in that covenant relationship are laid out in scripture for us to follow. We don't need the extra stuff. So that was our application.

I didn't specify before I went into it, but that was our application for that third point. Our motivation for living in our marriage as He has commanded us must be with our eyes squarely on Christ and doing it for His glory. resting in what he has done for us and out of a sense of motivation of praise and thankfulness and glory to the one who gave himself for us. Can you imagine the motivation shift in your marriage if you did things for Christ instead of your spouse? Because guess what? Your spouse is going to make you mad. No married couple in here shook their head at that. Right? Oh, my wife did. Okay, good. Your spouse is gonna make you mad and there's gonna be days that you don't feel like serving them the way you should. Amen? But when your motivation is Christ, who is perfect and did everything for you and sacrificed himself for you, do you think that would change your motivations a little bit? Even when you're mad. I'm not saying it's not difficult. So hear me, hear me say, I'm not saying it's not difficult because it is. But when we start focusing ourselves on Christ and being disciples of His first, especially in our marriages, our motivations shift and we begin to serve our spouses for

the sake of Christ instead of for the sake of them or what we think we can get back out of our spouse. That's the worst motivation we can do. So in conclusion, overall this text is correcting the skewed views of the Jewish culture. But I hope that while I'm talking about the skewed views of the Jewish culture, you're check-boxing all the things in our culture that match almost perfectly with what the Jews thought about marriage in their day. And by checking every box of our culture, that means very clearly that Jesus needs to correct our, we need to have our cultural perception of marriage corrected. Because even in the church, the world's cultural perspective slips in, doesn't it? We begin to pick up baggage because that's where we live, in a sin-broken world, and we begin to bring that baggage into the church, and we begin to look at things like social media to find what we need to be as spouses. I keep referencing it because it's so prevalent in all of our lives. It used to be the next marriage book back before the internet, but now it's just, you can find an article for anything. So let us keep our focus on God's view of marriage and why he gave it to us. And let us commit to the sanctity of marriage as laid out by God at creation. Human failure does not negate God's original design. I'll say that again. Human failure does not negate God's original design. And that is what we must strive for. Because that covenant was established to be permanent. for our good and for His glory. So let us rejoice in the marriages that we're allowed by God's grace to share. Because again, it's for our good and His glory. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we are so thankful for the gift of marriage. Even when it's hard and it's difficult, the most demanding relationship we have on this earth, Lord, You, by Your grace, have placed us exactly where You have intended us to be by Your sovereignty. And You will give us the grace to be disciples in this beautiful relationship that we have the gracious gift to be a part of. and help us remember that our motivations within our marriage, and it's so easy to forget, but help us to remember our motivations in our marriage is for your glory, not for our spouse, not for ourselves, not for our kids, it is for your glory. And let that motivate us to have God-glorifying, God-honoring marriages between two equally valued creatures that you have so graciously brought together. We love you and praise you and ask for all of this that we might do it to your glory and your holy name. Amen.