

Marriage, Divorce, and the Glory of God (Part 2)
Mark 10:1-12

I. Four Cornerstones for Cornerstone

A. Four Cornerstones

1. Purpose - to provide a foundation for understanding and embracing Jesus' intent in this teaching on marriage and divorce
2. Cornerstones
 - a. (10:1a) Jesus contributes to our personal experience of the Father's glory.
 - b. (10:1b) Jesus continues His custom of teaching.
 - c. (10:2-9) Jesus clarifies the commandment for His audience.
 - d. (10:10-12) Jesus connects His disciples with God's truth.

B. Covered Cornerstones

1. Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce adds to our understanding of God in His glory
 - a. **John 17:4 (ESV) *I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.***
 - b. This occasion with its content glorifies God.
 - c. This teaching is true to Christ's mission and God's Person
2. Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce continues His mission of revealing the mind, heart, and will of God through teaching
 - a. Jesus' custom of teaching ought to be matched by our custom of learning
 - b. We want to know God as He truly is with all the understanding and devotion Jesus intends to produce in us through His teaching.

C. Remaining Cornerstones

1. Jesus clarifies the commandment for His audience
2. Jesus connect His disciples with God's truth

II. Cornerstone 3: Jesus clarifies the commandment for His audience

A. Test Question: "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

1. Perspective on the test question
 - a. Is it within the boundaries of the stated and revered will of God?
 - b. Is it part of the divine covenant of love that God made with His chosen people, that a man may, at his discretion, abandon the legal, emotional, spiritual, physical, and theological commitment he vowed to keep with his wife?
 - c. They do not ask whether it is socially acceptable or whether divorce is commonly practiced.
 - d. They ask whether divorce, which at time is socially acceptable and commonly practiced, is justified by a declaration of God's will?
 - e. Is divorce a commandment from God?
2. Jesus' reversal: The Pharisees being tested
 - a. "What did Moses command you?"
 - (1) If you want to talk about law then let's talk about

commandments.

- (2) What did Moses command?
- b. They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”
 - (1) Notice they say, “Moses allowed” not “Moses commanded.”
 - (2) They have been caught in their own trap and they know it.
- c. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and the difference between permission and accommodation.
 - (1) **Deuteronomy 24:1-4 (ESV)** ¹ *“When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then 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 of his house, and she departs out of his house, ² and if she goes and becomes another man’s wife, ³ and the latter man hates 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 man dies, who took her to be his wife, ⁴ then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the LORD. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.*
 - (a) Conditional limitation
 - i) When one condition exists a second condition is forbidden.
 - ii) When a divorced woman remarries, she can never return to her first husband.
 - (2) Permission vs. accommodation
 - (a) Nowhere does Moses command or give permission for divorce
 - (b) Moses accommodates a practice he cannot prevent and limits the consequences of subsequent sin.
 - (c) Permission authorizes, accommodation acknowledges
 - i) Remember when middle school and high school guidance counselors started handing out birth control
 - ii) “We can’t prevent the behavior but we can minimize the consequences.”
 - iii) They might very well have gotten that idea from Moses because that is exactly what happens in De 24:1-4
 - a) Moses doesn’t allow or permit divorce.

- b) Moses applies damage control.
- c) Taking into account the unauthorized reality of divorce he moves to regulate the consequences.
- d. (v. 5) “This commandment” = the commandment of no return
 - (1) Why even make this limitation?
 - (2) “Because of your hardness of heart”
 - (a) Single word in Greek
 - (b) Means - “hardness of heart, arrogant obstinance”
 - (c) Moses acted as he did because he knew if they were willing to make divorce easy, the trend away from covenant faithfulness would also be increasingly easily abandoned: their sins and sinfulness would get worse
 - (d) Every concession to sin paves the way for greater commission of sin.

B. Jesus and Genesis: Turning our attention from Moses to God

1. Since Moses did not give a commandment regarding divorce in the covenant law, where do we go to find God’s perspective on marriage and divorce?
 - a. Let me remind you, if you want to find the ultimate truth about any cultural, social, or personal issue, start with God.
 - b. **Jesus takes us to Genesis.**
 - (1) **Mark 10:6-9 (ESV) *“But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’⁷ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife,⁸ and the two shall become one flesh.’⁹ So they are no longer two but one flesh.⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”***
 - (a) God made them two
 - (b) God makes them one
 - (c) God does not undo what He has done and man cannot undo what God has done.
 - (2) **Genesis 1:27 (ESV) *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.***
2. Three reasons God exalts marriage and rejects divorce. Then I’ll offer you a final reason Christians should embrace God’s perspective on marriage as well, no matter what our life experience has been.
 - a. The lifelong covenant commitment between one biological male and one biological female, in the ideal, points to the character of God Himself.
 - (1) This is what Jesus is referring to when he says, “But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.”

- (2) The image of God, which humanity is designed by our Creator to put on display in the world, is seen and communicated in the union of male and female.
- (a) Together they constitute the image of God.
 - (b) Paul wrote in Romans 1:20 *For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*
 - (c) When we think of the “things that have been made,” I don’t know about you, but I usually think of verses like Psalm 19:1 *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*
 - i) But the stars and the moon and the heavens are not all that God made when He created creation.
 - ii) He also made male and female and put them in a union, and made them living examples of His moral and personal likeness.
 - (d) The lifelong covenant commitment between one man and one woman points to the character of God Himself, His faithfulness, His unity, His love, His devotion.
 - (e) The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit exist in perpetual perfect union and love and faithfulness, and marriage is created by God to point to Himself.
 - (f) Divorce denies the image of God and creates a false picture of the one true God among those who might be looking for Him.
 - (g) That’s why God exalts marriage and rejects divorce.
- b. The lifelong covenant commitment between one biological male and one biological female, in the ideal, produces offspring who carry the image of God into the world and advance God’s mission to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD.
- (1) **Genesis 1:28 (ESV) *And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”***
 - (2) **Malachi 2:15 (ESV) *Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.***
 - (3) **Habakkuk 2:14 (ESV) *For the earth will be filled with***

the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

(4) Divorce spreads a false picture of the person, the will, and the glory of God.

c. The lifelong covenant commitment between one biological male and one biological female, in the ideal, refers to the eternal relationship of covenant love between Christ and the Church.

(1) **Ephesians 5:31-32 (ESV)** ³¹ *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”* ³² *This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.*

(2) EXPLANATION

(a) Paul takes an ordinary human relationship and reveals its extraordinary theological purpose

(b) Marriage is more than an occasion for a biological male and a biological female to find some personal happiness and pleasure.

(c) Covenant marriage provides a living illustration of Christ’s covenant love and commitment for His church.

i) Christ chooses His church

ii) Christ loves His church

iii) Christ gives Himself up for His church

iv) Christ sanctifies His church

v) Christ presents His church to Himself in splendor

vi) Christ perfects His church

vii) Christ advances the holiness and blamelessness of His church

viii) Christ nourishes and cherishes His church

(d) Paul says, husbands, love your wives like this because as you live out your covenant commitments to your wife, you reveal in the real world in real time, the covenant commitment of Christ to all believers and every believer.

(e) Marriage and Divorce

i) Covenant marriage reveals the truth about Christ and the church

ii) Divorce lies about Christ and the church.

III. Conclusion

A. Next Week: The Fourth Cornerstone

B. A reason to embrace God’s exaltation of marriage and rejection of divorce regardless of your personal experience.

1. Christian, let me take you to Ephesians 1 and show you something amazing.

2. **Ephesians 1:11-12 (ESV)** ¹¹ *In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,* ¹² *so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.*

- a. We are “to the praise of His glory” when we so enjoy the glory of His grace that we live lives that testify to His praiseworthiness.
- b. We are “to the praise of His glory” when we so delight in the knowledge of God that we desire Him and His ways to the exclusion of the world and its ways.
- c. We are “to the praise of His glory” when His glory is the joy and delight of our lives, of our convictions, of our commitments, of our marriages.