

>>>>>> Lesson 26 <<<<<<<

- 1) We will jump back into chapter 10 at vs. 1 thru 12.
- 2) We started this discussion last time with what the Jewish society felt about divorce in the 1st century.
- 3) This was precipitated by the Pharisees' question and Jesus' answer.

Mark 10:1-2 (NIV)

- 1) There were always constants in Jesus' ministry
 - a) Always crowds flocking to Him to hear Him speak and to be healed by Him.
 - b) Always the religious leaders seeking to destroy Him by discrediting Him at every turn.
- 2) This new location in Judea is no exception.
- 3) As usual, Jesus dispatches their attempt with solid scriptural teaching.
- 4) Before we look at the question and the answer Jesus gives, we really need to understand where the Jewish societal mindset was at this time regarding divorce.
- 5) Some 400 years before this, the prophet Malachi had written God's words to His people

Mal 2:16 (NIV)

- 6) So, what led God to say this to His people.
- 7) If we go to the beginning, we know that God created men and women to be joined equally with each other.
- 8) At the fall that changed and it was no longer equal.
- 9) Along with that, came selfish desires and broken relationships.
- 10) Finally, God allowed Moses to permit a man to divorce his wife for reasons of indecency (we'll get to that word in a minute).

Deut 24:1-5 (NIV)

- 11) The Hebrew word translated "indecent" literally means "nakedness," not in a physical sense but in the sense of something shameful.
- 12) The same word is used in Deuteronomy 23:14 to describe things in the camp of Israel that the holy God must not see.
- 13) The term does not refer to adultery but to sinful behavior.
- 14) It describes things that violate normal social responsibility and behavior in a civilized culture and hence are disrespectful of others.
- 15) The word certainly cannot be extrapolated to mean anything that a man disliked about his wife.
- 16) However, by Jesus' time, these old testament standards had long been abandoned.
- 17) As we discussed last time, there was God's opinion – Mal 2:16 "I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel ...

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18) Then, there were two competing groups with opinions on what constituted a legal reason for divorce.

19) The prominent rabbi Hillel (110 B.C.–A.D. 10), had made divorce easy.

- a) According to his view, a man was permitted to divorce his wife for basically anything she did that displeased him.
 - i) burning his dinner
 - ii) allowing someone to see her ankles
 - iii) letting her hair down
 - iv) making a negative comment about her mother-in-law
 - v) or if all else failed, because he found someone else that he preferred.

20) The other group followed Rabbi Shammai.

- a) They believed that a man could divorce his wife only if she was unfaithful to him
- b) In other words, "something indecent" was interpreted to refer to only adultery.

21) Picking up in vs. 2 again and continuing our reading ...

Mark 10:2-12 (NIV)

- 1) The intent of the Pharisees was to cast Jesus – in the minds of the people – in one of two ways:
 - a) As a militant hard line who basically agreed with Shammai
 - b) Or as a liberal who would **not** have stood with John the Baptist against Herod Antipas and basically was agreeing with Hillel.
- 2) Jesus clearly did neither.
- 3) Instead, He pointed back to God’s plan and God’s ideas concerning divorce thus convicting the Pharisees for even asking the question.
- 4) The LABC comments:

Jesus had clearly explained that divorce dissolved a divinely formed union. These people were divorcing in order to get remarried. Here he explained that marriage after divorce is adultery. To say that a man could commit adultery **against** his wife went beyond Jewish teaching and elevated the status of the wife to a position of equality. Women were never meant to be mere property in a marriage relationship; God’s plan had always been a partnership of the two becoming “united into one” (10:8).

- 5) The rabbis’ interpretation of Moses’ law permitted remarriage after divorce, but Jesus said that was committing adultery.
- 6) Matthew recorded the same words of Jesus but added that he gave one exception: “unless his wife has been unfaithful” (Matthew 19:9, see also Matthew 5:32).

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- 7) Jesus then added, “**And if a woman divorces her husband and remarries, she commits adultery.**”
- 8) Scholars agree that Jesus’ words refer to both husband and wife; that is, the unfaithfulness of one could be grounds for divorce by the other.
- 9) John MacArthur comments: “The church’s view of divorce, however, must not be based on the shifting sands of societal norms but on the bedrock of biblical truth.”
- 10) I would suggest that MacArthur’s statement could be changed to refer not only to divorce but also to include *any* societal norm that the church (God’s people) start to buy into.
- 11) God wanted Israel to be isolated from the rest of a sinful world so that they could grow to be His people with His laws and ideas “written on their hearts” – THEY FAILED MISERABLY and CONTINUOUSLY.

What does God want of us as His church today? Are we to be isolated?

What is the difference between isolated and set apart?

What is our mission compared to that of the Israelite communities?

- Theirs inward as opposed to ours outward.

How do we accomplish that mission?

- We bring Jesus Christ and His message of love and forgiveness to “a sinful world.”
- To do this we must deal with many issues, not the least of which is the very thing we were discussing a moment ago – **extreme societal acceptances of a sinful life style.**
 - a) Society as a whole accepting more and more sinful behaviors as “O.K.” makes it very difficult for people to accept that they should not engage in these behaviors.
 - b) We hate the sin and won’t engage in it – but, we **MUST** show love to the sinner and not be condemning.
 - c) This is a very difficult line to walk. We cannot compromise scripture but we must show love.
 - d) It is the Holy Spirits job to convict the hearts of sinners.

Do you think the Holy Spirit’s job is getting harder?

- 12) Our job is to present Christ as savior and lover of their souls – the way to eternal life.
- 13) A major part of accomplishing this is relating to people in a manner that does not condone their sinful life style while,
 - a) at the same time **lovingly** showing them the error of their ways **and** Christ as the savior they need.
- 14) To do this we must avoid taking scripture in either of two extreme directions:

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- 15) Conservative Extreme – Making it be more anti-societal by our traditions and thus showing, not love for our fellow man, but a “better than thou attitude” by saying “see how good we are at doing what God wants”.
- 16) Liberal Extreme – nullifying scripture to gain acceptance by society – “I know the Bible says this but its really o.k.”
- 17) Neither extreme is acceptable.
- 18) One way that occurs is to explain what scripture says without watering it down (being liberal) while at the same time sympathizing with the position it may put the person in.

Any

- 1) In this next passage, the disciples are still struggling with what is important and what is not.

Mark 10:13-16 (NIV)

- 1) Here we have another incident involving the children.
- 2) The disciples probably rebuked the parents because this action (blessing the children) was taking valuable time away from their time with Jesus and His teaching.
- 3) There are two strong terms here – both filled with emotion – rebuked (used by the disciples) and indignant (used by Jesus).
- 4) Basically, I think this was what one might refer to as a heated moment.
- 5) This is the only time in scripture where Jesus directed such strong anger toward His disciples.
- 6) Jesus explained that little children have the kind of faith and trust needed to enter God's kingdom.
- 7) I think we should take notice here that Jesus zeros in on the children not the parents.
- 8) We don't know the state of the parents and, it was not about them anyway.
- 9) Parents would often take their children to rabbis for blessings and in this case, regardless of what they knew or believed about Jesus, He was considered a prominent rabbi.
 - a) Their idea was to have their children blessed.
 - b) Jesus' idea was to minister to and show love to these trusting innocent children and, in turn to the parents.
- 10) I am sure that He did not want the negative attitude being shown by His disciples to have a lasting negative influence on these children.
- 11) Anyone of any age who exhibits such faith and trust is promised access to Jesus and to the kingdom.
- 12) These parents and their children likely came to Jesus in humility and absolutely received his blessing as a gift.
- 13) Jesus, unlike his disciples had a perfect sense of what was more important and what was less important.

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14) As important as it was for Him to be with His disciples at this time, it was more important to show the love and caring to these children and their parents.

How good is our sense of priority?

What are some things you can think of that will help us set our priorities better?

Other